SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSES RUN BY CHILDREN (SEE PAGE 474)

The "Real Life Romances" in the JANUARY ROYAL MAGAZINE are stranger than fiction. FOURPENCE MONTHLY.

PEARSON'S WEEKLY.

TO INTEREST, TO ELEVATE, TO AMUSE.

For the best of Fiction and Fashion. THE LADY'S MAGAZINE SIXPENCE MONTHLY.

No. 702.] TRANSMISSION AT BOOK RATES. WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1903. ENTERED AT STATIONERS HALL. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

BOVRIL

CHRISTMAS weather is BOVRIL weather.

Grape-Nuts

THE MODERN BRAIN BUILDER.

Dr. Yorke-Davies, the well-known authority on dietetics, in his able work, "Health and Condition in the Active and Sedentary," says:

"Many a case of insanity is due to brain starving, and most are familiar with the fact that an attack of indigestion, when the food comes for a few days to nourish the system, often leads to depression of spirits bordering on profound melancholia" (page 15).

Try as we may, no method will ever be found to overcome brain starvation, except to furnish the delicate brain and nerve centres with those elements especially designed by Nature to feed them.

Recognising this fact, a celebrated food expert, after long and careful experiments, devised the well-known food, GRAPE NUTS.

The brain must be fed on phosphate of potash combined with albumen, and these elements provided by Nature in wheat and barley the manufacturers of Grape-Nuts have retained.

Every ounce of GRAPE-NUTS tells.

THERE'S A REASON.

GOLD PLATE CIGARETTES

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Mild and Medium, 10 for 3d.

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Surplice Linen, 7d. per yard. Dusters from 2/3 per doz. Linen Glass Cloths, 4/9 per doz. Frilled Linen Pillow Cases from 1/4 each. Fine Linen and Linen Damask, 8½d. per yard. Strong Huckaback Towels, 5/6 per doz. Appointments to His Majesty the King and the Late Empress Frederick.

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reduced it by two-thirds."

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NATURAL LAWS.

It is impossible to have a South Front All Round Your House

BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO PREVENT, RELIEVE, OR REMOVE HUMAN SUFFERING BY NATURAL LAWS.

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CAUTION.—*Examine the Capsule and see that it is marked ENO'S FRUIT SALT, otherwise you have the sincerest form of flattery—IMITATION.*

MORAL FOR ALL:

"I need not be missed if another succeed me,
To reap down those fields which in spring I have sown.
He who ploughed and who sowed is not missed by the reaper,
He is only remembered by what he has done."

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with Workrooms and Showrooms replete with every convenience, justifies us in presenting our customers a better selection than a more commodious stock than ever.

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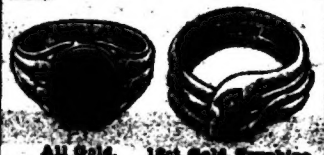
in all departments, comprising the latest and choicest designs, making our place unique and delightfully dear.

THE BEST IN LONDON

at about 30 per cent. UNDER USUAL PRICES.

Table which we know cannot be obtained elsewhere.



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Our designs are original. All our Gems are guaranteed genuine, and all Gold has the Hall Mark upon it.

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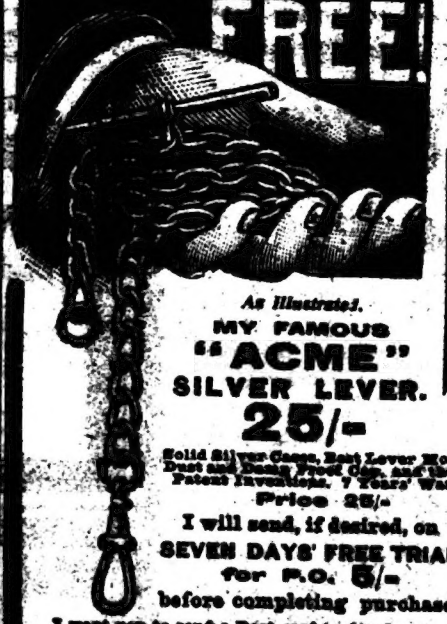

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BIG BOOK OF BARGAINS.

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Lady's Gold Watches, 20/-; Gent's Silver Watches, 7/6; Gold Gem Rings, set with Rubies, Pearls, &c., 4/6; Silver Albertas, 3/6; Clocks, 1/6; Cutlery, Plate, &c.

I SUPPLY EVERY WANT.

If your requirements are not illustrated, send me particulars, and the goods will be sent by return from the enormous stock at my command.

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MUEL, DEPT. D, MARKET ST., MANCHESTER.

A Full Length, Massive, Hall-marked

SOLID SILVER ALBERT.

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Dear Sir, Please send me your "Acme" Silver Lever, for which I enclose P.O. 5/-, together with FREE SILVER ALBERT as described above.

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DEVONSHIRE CREAM.

(Really genuine.) In patent air tight tins, 2/6; 3lb., 4/-, including tin. Sole Agents, COURTENEY, Merchant Bishop Devon.

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THE ORIGINAL MILK CHOCOLATE

Delicately flavoured and absolutely pure. Most nutritious and sustaining. A TRUE FOOD. Sold everywhere. Sole Agents from [illegible] & Co. Ltd., London, S.E.

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Ridiculously low price. Send at once. J. WILSON & Co. (Dept. J.), 17 Oswald [illegible]

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Do not take pills and correctives when Shredded Wheat Biscuit and Triscuit will remove conditions brought about by eating starchy and white flour products. A natural food like Shredded Wheat is a body builder. Write for sample.

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All Railway Lovers should Read the Story on the Next Page.

Splendid NEW SERIAL Just Started in "SHORT STORIES."

PEARSON'S WEEKLY.

TO INTEREST TO ELEVATE, TO AMUSE.

Powerful SERIAL STORY Just begun in "SHORT STORIES."

No. 702. TRANSMISSION AT BOOK RATES. WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1903. ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL. ONE PENNY.

BREAKING IT GENTLY.

FATHER: "Eleanor, now that you have given up young Hopkins, I wish he would stop coming to the house."

Daughter: "He's been here only seven times this week, pa."

"Only seven times? How many do you want him to come?"

"Don't be harsh, father. George is trying to break it off gradually."

HE: "I can kiss you easier, dear, if you sit in my lap."

She: "I really believe you're getting lazy."

"DON'T you think it is a beautiful thing to see a young girl growing into womanhood?"

"Yes, my dear; so many of them seem to want to grow into manhood."

LAWYER: "Do you swear positively that you know more than half this jury?"

Witness: "Yes, sir; and now that I have taken a good look at 'em, I'll swear that I know more than all of 'em put together."

HE WAS CAUGHT NAPPING.

WIFE: "What do you think of that hat Miss Fussanfeather wore at church this morning?"

Husband: "I didn't notice Miss Fussanfeather's hat."

"It's very funny you didn't see it. She sat directly in front of you."

"Well, suppose she did. Do you suppose I go to church to look at women's hats?"

"Well, my dear, it's the same hat Miss Fussanfeather wore to the theatre last night, and which you claimed obstructed your view of the stage."

Husband concludes that he was caught napping.

"I DON'T feel very well, mamma," said a little boy of four years after a too hearty dinner one day. "I have such a pain in my lap."

"I'LL never forgive Brown for marrying Lucy, and taking her from under my roof. I never expect to find anyone to take her place."

"Was she your only daughter?"

"No, sir, she was my only cook."

PENELOPE: "Men are so rude!"

Jack: "What's anybody been saying or doing to you now?"

Penelope: "A man gave me his seat in the railway carriage to-day, and never thanked me for taking it."

COMBS MADE OF MILK.

AT a recent Milk Supply Exhibition in Hamburg there were several cases of articles which apparently had no connection whatever with the product of the cow. There were combs, cigar-holders, knife-handles, tables inlaid with marble in various colours and great slabs of marble—or apparently marble—with blocks of ebony, and many other things too numerous to mention. When the inquiring visitor asked why those things were in the Milk Supply Exhibition, he was told that they were all made of milk!

The skim milk of many farms in Germany has no sale. The people do not appreciate the fact that a quart of skim milk contains as much nutriment as a quarter of a pound of meat. Therefore the inventive Teuton decided to make use of it in some other way.

The principle of skim milk is a substance known as casein; it is really curd. This substance was mixed with others, colouring matter was added, and the result was galalith, or milk stone, which is as hard as buffalo horn, and can be used for innumerable purposes. It has the advantage of being light and non-inflammable.

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A MOORLAND FLOWER.

A Woman's Sigh for Days that are Gone.

She dwelt by the moorland grey and bleak,
Where the winds are free and wild;
As a blush rose fair was her dimpled cheek,
And her heart, the heart of a child!
And a lover came in the sweet Springtide
And stole her heart away,
And bore her one morning, a quiet bride,
To the city, his own for aye!

Ah for the days that are no more,
Ah for the moorland flow'r;
She would give a year of the city drear
To be as of old one hour!

For the city to her is a dark, sad tale,
And its sorrows are hers to-day;
Her cheek with a shadow of ill is pale
That love cannot woo away.
For ever in dreams her moorland home
And the days that are gone she can see;
And her life is a longing there to roam,
Once again, as a child might, free!

Ah for the days that are no more,
Ah for the moorland flow'r;
She would give a year of the city drear
To be as of old one hour!

THOUGHTFUL LITTLE WIFE.

"HENRY," greeted the little blue-eyed woman, "do you remember saying you were going to colour your meerschaum brown?"

"Yes, dear," replied her big husband.

"Well, I knew you were busy, so I coloured it."

"You? How did you colour it, pray?"

"Why, I painted it, of course."

EAT LOTS OF ALMONDS.

ACCORDING to a celebrated health expert, blanched almonds give the higher nerve or brain and muscle food, and the man who wishes to keep his brain-power up would do well to include them in his daily bill of fare.

Juicy fruits give the same in less proportion, and are eaten by all men whose living depends on their clear-headedness. Apples supply the brain with rest.

Prunes afford proof against nervousness, but are not muscle-feeding. They should be avoided by those who suffer from the liver. But it has been proved that fruits do not have the same effect upon everybody. Some men have never been able to eat apples without suffering the agony of indigestion; to others, strawberries are like poison.

"Do you not think that Miss Snape is a very graceful girl?"

"I never saw her but once, and she didn't look very graceful then."

"Indeed! Where did you see her?"

"I saw her falling over a wheelbarrow."

OUR GREAT SCHEME.

WITHIN the next few weeks we shall start a scheme of interest to every reader of *Pearson's Weekly*. Until details are complete it is impossible to even hint at the nature of the idea, for to do so would be to show our hand to contemporaries, who are always watching us to see what our next move may be. Readers, however, may rest assured that they will not be disappointed in the magnitude of the idea.

TWICE, NOT TWO.

A YOUNG lady was sitting with a gallant captain in a charmingly decorated recess. On her knee was a diminutive niece for appearance's sake. In the adjoining room, with the door open, were the rest of the company.

Says the little niece in a jealous and very audible voice:

"Auntie, kiss me too."

"You should say twice, Ethel dear; two is not grammar," was the immediate rejoinder.

TOMMY: "Papa, what are follies?"

Professor Broadhead: "Amusements that we have grown tired of, my son."

A MAN who broke out of gaol left behind him a note addressed to the governor of the prison. "I hope you will pardon me for the liberty I'm taking," were the opening words of the epistle.

SHOWMAN: "Look here, your bill says 'Forty-nine days' board for camel.' You've only had him seven days!"

Keeper: "That's all right; that camel has seven stomachs. See?"

THE WORM'S PUNISHMENT.

A FATHER had been lecturing his son upon the evils of staying out late at night and of getting up late in the morning. "You never will mount to anything," he continued, "unless you turn over a new leaf. Remember that the early bird catches the worm."

"How about the worm, father," inquired the young man, borrowing the old sarcasm, "wasn't he rather foolish to get up so early?"

"My son," replied the old man, solemnly, "that worm hadn't been to bed at all. He was on his way home."

WIFE: "Oh, John, there are some lovely hats in that window."

Hubby: "Yes, I know. They look so well there that it would be a pity to take any of them away."

"And now, dear," asked a governess, "what can you tell me about Minerva?"

"She was a goddess of wisdom, and never married," was the reply.

"PA, what's a tyrant?"

"A tyrant is one who governs you without your choice, and who makes you do what he wants without regard to what you want."

"Oh, I see. You and ma are tyrants, aren't you, pa?"

DROMEDARIES SMOKE CIGARS.

THERE is no reason why a dromedary should not be partial to a good cigar. Most dromedaries, according to a menagerie proprietor, are particularly fond of tobacco-smoke, and can be made to do almost anything under its influence.

"Travellers in Egypt," he asserts, "rely more on tobacco-smoke for their control over these huge beasts than anything else. When travelling on long journeys the dromedaries are in many cases required to travel night and day without rest, and the beasts are kept up to their tasks by smoking cigars. The driver carries a triangular piece of wood, which is pierced at one point like a cigar-holder. This is inserted in the mouth of the beast, the cigar being lit and pressed into the hole in the same fashion followed by man.

"The dromedary immediately closes its eyes and puffs away through its nostrils until the cigar is burnt away. The indulgence appears to refresh it, and the keeper has no difficulty in persuading the animal to plod on without further rest."

Ever eaten spiders, or grubs, or ants? They make excellent food, as you'll discover if you get the January ROYAL MAGAZINE

NEW SERIES.

The Investigations of Godfrey Page, Railwayac.

RELATED BY HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW, AND HERE SET FORTH BY VICTOR L. WHITECHURCH.

[*Godfrey Page takes the most intense interest—amounting almost to madness—in anything and everything connected with railways, and for this reason I have termed him a "railwayac," which is a shortened form of "railway maniac." By profession he is an architect, but being possessed of ample means, only works occasionally, spending his leisure in solving railway mysteries.*—V. L. W.]

II.—THE ROBBERY ON THE WOODHURST BRANCH.

"I THINK," said my brother-in-law, Godfrey Page, "that the little affair it was my good luck to solve on the Woodhurst Branch of the South Midland line might be interesting enough for you to chronicle. Though, mind you, I don't take any great credit to myself for doing it. It was simply by chance that I happened to be near the spot at the time and was able to lay my finger on one or two points that served as clues."

"Suppose you give me the details," I said.

"All right," he replied, producing a railway map and spreading it out on the table, "I'll try to put the whole thing before you."

I have thought it best, accordingly, to tell the story in as nearly his own words as possible.

* * * * *

If you will take the trouble to glance at the map of the South Midland system you will see that about eighty miles from its main terminus at Silkminster there is a station called Cranfield Junction.

Cranfield itself is little more than a large village, but it possesses a weekly cattle market of no small importance which attracts the farmers and butchers from many places in the neighbourhood on Mondays.

From the junction a single line of some ten miles runs to Woodhurst, a country town of fair size. About midway between Woodhurst and Cranfield Junction is a station called Stoveley, and the line is worked with two staffs—the Cranfield to Stoveley and the Stoveley to Woodhurst. Don't you understand what I mean?

Well, you know that trains running on a single line are worked by the electric staff, or tablet. The driver in this case receives a staff at Cranfield permitting him to proceed to Stoveley, where he has to give it up. Arrived there he is not allowed to go on until a similar staff, extracted from the electrical apparatus, has been given him for the next section to Woodhurst.

Why doesn't he receive one staff for the entire journey? Because Stoveley is a "crossing" place, the line running double through the station, so that he often has to wait there till a train comes in from Woodhurst before he can go on. The idea is simple. Only one train can be on either of the two sections at the same time.

I've got an old friend living at Cranfield and I had been spending a week-end with him. I started from his house to the station on Monday morning some little time before my train left, so as to have half an hour to spare in looking round—you know my hobby—and also because I knew the station-master, a most intelligent man, who was always ready to give me any information.

On my way to the station I remember that I wanted change for a five-pound note, so I stepped into a smart little building in the village "High Street" called "Woodhurst Bank—Cranfield Branch." There was a solitary clerk behind the counter.

"Very sorry, sir," he replied when I asked him for change, "but Mr. Crane, the manager, hasn't come yet and he has the keys of the safe. I don't expect he'll be here till the next train now, though he isn't usually so late."

"Oh, then he comes by train, does he?" I remarked casually.

"Yes. He has a season-ticket between this place and Woodhurst, where he lives," replied the somewhat garrulous clerk.

I got my note changed at a shop and walked on to the station. There was plenty to see there. They've got a very neat system for indicating—but there, I'm drifting into my hobby again. Suffice it to say that I hunted up my friend the station-master and had a chat with him.

Presently he said:

"There's been a robbery on the Woodhurst branch this morning."

"A robbery?"

"Yes. I haven't heard the full details yet, but there seems to be quite a mystery about it."

"How so?" I asked.

"The news was brought us by the 9.6 train. A gentleman, one of our season-ticket holders, appears to have lost a large sum of money while travelling between Woodhurst and Stoveley. In fact, he's the manager of the local bank here, a Mr. Crane."

"How has he lost it? Where did he miss it? What——"

"I don't know yet," interrupted the station-master. "He's stayed behind at Stoveley to investigate and the guard hadn't time to tell us all about it. I expect he'll be here by the next train, though. It's due in a few minutes. By the way, Mr. Page, you're rather well-known as a revealer of railway mysteries. Would you like me to introduce you to Mr. Crane?"

"I should very much," I replied. "If I can be of any use to him I shall be delighted. I'm quite willing to put off going home till this evening—in fact, there's nothing that I should enjoy better than looking into the matter."

In due time the next train from Woodhurst arrived and there stepped out of it a short, elderly man with plenty of anger and perplexity stamped on his countenance. The station-master lost no time in introducing me to him.

"Mr. Page is a railway enthusiast who has solved several strange affairs on the line," he explained.

"I'm sure I shall be very grateful to him if he can help me to recover my money," said Mr. Crane.

"Perhaps you will allow Mr. Crane and myself to go into your office for a few minutes and talk the matter over," I suggested.

The station-master readily agreed to this and we soon found ourselves in his little private room.

"Now, Mr. Crane," I said, "can you tell me exactly what has happened?"

"Why, I've lost nearly three hundred pounds in gold, sir! *That's* what's happened."

"When did you miss it?"

"I'll tell you. I come over here from Woodhurst every day, you know. I'm a first-class season-ticket holder. On Mondays I always bring a fairly large sum in notes and gold. It's the local market day and there's no knowing how much cash some of the farmers will want paid out in a hurry. Drovers and dealers don't always care to handle cheques, they like to hear the chink of coin. The notes I always carry in a pocket-book. *They* haven't disappeared. The gold I bring in a small black handbag."

"Locked, of course?"

"Certainly. Now I'm a man of the strictest habits. Banking makes one methodical. I always try to secure a compartment to myself on Mondays and get the guard to lock me in. Then I invariably put my bag on the seat farthest from the side on which one gets in and sit in the seat next to it—the middle one—with my back to the engine. This morning I came down to the station in plenty of time and took my seat as usual. The guard, who, of course, knows me well, came up and locked both doors."

"*Both* doors?"

"Yes. I always think it's safer, you know, and I always try the doors afterwards to make sure he *has* locked them. Well, presently the train started."

"Are you sure the bag was still there?"

"Positive. Then I opened my paper and began to read. In a few minutes we entered the tunnel and, of course, I put my paper down because there were no lights in the carriage. There never are in the day trains."

"And there always ought to be," I exclaimed; "no train ought to run through a tunnel at any time without lights in the carriages. It simply means catering for crimes."

"When we got out of the tunnel," resumed Mr. Crane, "I took up my paper again."

"Without noticing whether the bag was there?"

"Yes. But in less than a minute we began to slow down for Stoveley station, which is just beyond the tunnel. Then I glanced at the seat by my side which, to my horror, was empty."

"Obviously the bag was taken when the train was in the tunnel. Did you hear anything extraordinary?"

"Nothing."

"Was the window on the offside open?"

"Yes."

"Ah, that's a weak point. It would have been perfectly easy for someone outside on the footboard to put his arm in and take it. Do you always have the window open?"

"No, not always."

"Now tell me exactly what happened next."

"As soon as I missed the bag I rushed to the other side and put my head out of the window. The train was just coming to a standstill on the platform. When the guard stepped out I shouted to him at once and he came running up. I asked him to unlock the door, and let me out. He called to a porter to do so."

"He called to a porter?"

"Yes."

"Why didn't he unlock the door himself?"

"I'm sure I don't know. Then the station-master came and I told him what had happened. We first of all searched the train thoroughly, but could discover nothing."

"How about the other passengers?"

"There were only eighteen altogether. Very few travel by that early train as a rule. Of course, we've taken down their names. Most of them were local people whom I know, farmers and butchers."

"You're sure you searched the train thoroughly?"

"Certain. Then we searched the line. The station-master and a policeman and myself went back to the tunnel, looking carefully along the track, and walked right through it with lanterns. There wasn't a sign of anything. At the other end of the tunnel is a signal-box and the man assured us that no one had come out of the tunnel. He must have seen them if they had. There's only one theory."

"What is it?"

"That the bag was thrown out of the train by the thief immediately it came out of the tunnel and that someone was waiting to pick it up and make off with it. The curious point is that they were not seen, for the country is quite bare, no trees or anything, and how they could have made off I don't know. The police are searching."

"I don't agree with you at all," I said. Then I turned to the station-master and asked him for a working time-table.

"I see there was another train standing in Stoveley station when Mr. Crane's train arrived," I remarked when I had consulted the book.

"Yes," said the station-master, "a goods train that waits there for passing purposes."

"Had this train gone on when you searched the tunnel?" I asked.

"No," said Mr. Crane, "they kept it back on purpose. But tell me, what do you think?"

"I've got a glimmering of an idea," I replied, "and I'll try to help you if you like."

"I shall be most grateful."

"Then please write a line or two authorising me to take up the case as a sort of private detective you have engaged."

He did so.

"There's only one more thing I should like to know at present," I added. "Had the bag any particular mark on it?"

"No. Only my visiting-card which was tied on the handle by a bit of string."

"Thank you," I said, "I shall go to Stoveley by the next train and see what I can do. There is one little point that has struck me."

Now there were several things in this robbery that were most palpable. It was obvious that the crime was a premeditated one. The thief knew Mr. Crane's habits and that he carried this large sum of gold on Monday mornings. Therefore it was a robbery that had been carefully planned out beforehand.

The chief thing that the thief had to think of, was not so much the taking of the bag as the careful getting rid of it directly afterwards, within a minute of the train's exit from the tunnel. It would not do for him to throw it out at haphazard and go and seek for it afterwards. This would have been to have risked capture.

Again, an accomplice by the side of the line would have been too clumsy in broad daylight. All these things I carefully thought over as I journeyed to Stoveley. Arrived there I showed the station-master Mr. Crane's letter and questioned him closely as to the searching of the train.

"It couldn't have been there, sir," he said. "We looked everywhere, under the seats, on the racks, in every corner of the guard's van, even, and on the engine. Yes, we went outside and searched under the train and on the roofs of the carriages. No; it certainly wasn't there."

"Well," I said, "get a couple of powerful lanterns and we'll have another walk through the tunnel."

"That's no use," he said; "we've looked through it carefully. The bag's not there."

"Very likely not," I answered, "but I've a sort of an idea we may find something else."

So we started along the line and entered the tunnel. I searched every yard most carefully, especially on the left-hand side, the side on which the bag must have been abstracted. We had gone more than half way through when the gleam of my lantern shone upon a small bright object by the side of the rail and I stooped eagerly for it.

"I've found it!" I exclaimed triumphantly.

"What?" cried the station-master.

I handed him the thing I had picked up.

"Why, it's only a railway carriage key," he said disdainfully; "that can't have anything to do with it."

"I beg to differ from you," I said, taking back the key and putting it into my pocket, "it's more than a carriage key. It's the key to this robbery."

"How?"

"I'll explain later on. We'll go back to the station now. I want to have a look round."

Arrived in the station, I was careful to find out the exact position in which the train had stood when stopping at the platform.

"Now," I went on, "there was a goods train on the other side at the time. Tell me, was there a front brake van to it?"

"No, only the rear one."

"Good! Whereabouts was the engine standing?"

He showed me. It was, of course, at the tunnel end of the platform and the passenger train from Woodhurst had run quite past it before the latter stopped.

As I stood in the six-foot way thinking out my idea, my eye rested on a little bit of card lying, half hidden, under the rail. Judge of my great joy when on picking it up I found it was a visiting card bearing the name—

MR. SAMUEL CRANE,

and that it was torn!

I knew now that my suspicions were correct.

The Stoveley station-master was so dense and the local police sergeant who was investigating the case so supercilious, that I determined to go back to Cranfield Junction by the next train and set the necessary machinery in motion there. And it was fortunate that I did so, for there I found, just arrived from Silkminster, the divisional superintendent of the line, who knew me by repute.

As soon as the station-master had introduced us I told him I did not think it was necessary for him to go on to Stoveley, and proceeded to ask him a few questions.

"First," I said, "I want to know who were the driver and fireman on the engine of the goods train that was waiting at Stoveley."

He consulted an official table.

"Driver Hall and Fireman Bryant."

"Where do they live?"

"At Silkminster."

"What's the number of their engine?"

He looked again.

"Number 218," he said.

"Tell me her work for the day."

"She left Silkminster early this morning to run the goods through to Woodhurst. Then she ran back here with an empty train and has gone down the main line. This afternoon she returns to Silkminster with an express goods."

"I see. Now about Guard Franklin who worked the passenger train."

"He runs that train through to Silkminster and returns to Woodhurst this afternoon."

"Does he pass engine No. 218?"

"No."

"Tell me if you know if he is friendly with either Hall or Bryant?"

"Hall is his brother-in-law, I believe."

"Ah, that's conclusive. Now I'll tell you my little theory, and then I think you'll agree with me that our best plan will be to proceed at once to Silkminster. We might ask Mr. Crane to come with us. He'll be interested."

I laid bare my ideas of the case to the divisional superintendent, who agreed with me that my plan was well worth developing. I then left him to put the telegraph to work over certain quarters of the line and went to find Mr. Crane.

The latter was nearly distracted, having spent a most unhappy morning at the bank. He at once said he would come with us to Silkminster and presently we all three started. Before we reached our destination we caught a glimpse of

1s., should be in every home; post free for 1s. 2d., from the
Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

engine 218 and its train, drawn up on a "refuge siding" to allow us to run by.

We had half an hour to spare at Silkminster before Number 218 was due and we at once repaired to the engine sheds and made a few arrangements. Then we took up our positions in a dark corner so as not to arouse suspicion when the engine came in to be cleaned.

After a bit in she came, stopping over a "pit" to allow the fire to be raked out. The driver took his dinner bag and tea-can from the footplate and got off.

"He's gone to the office to 'sign off,'" whispered the superintendent, "and I've given orders for him to be detained there till I come."

Meanwhile the fireman had descended and stood chatting to one of the men. We emerged from our corner and went straight up to him.

"Your name's Bryant, isn't it?" asked the superintendent.

"Yes, sir," said the man, looking at us with some surprise.

"Tell me, what were you doing when you were waiting at Stoveley this morning for the 9.8 from Woodhurst to pass you?"

The man stared.

"Nothing particular," he said.

"You didn't notice anything when the train came in?"

"I was under my engine, sir," replied the man.

"Aha," I said. "Did you go there of your own accord?"

"My driver sent me to oil up."

"Evidently *he* doesn't know anything," said the superintendent. "Now we'll go and have a look at the driver."

We found him in the office looking rather uncomfortable. He was holding his dinner bag in his hand.

The superintendent looked at him sharply.

"Your bag appears to be very heavy, my man," he said.

The driver gave a gasp.

"Allow me to feel the weight of it," went on the superintendent, stretching out his hand.

"It's no concern of yours, sir."

"I'm not so sure. Give it to me."

He seized it and opened it. There was something wrapped up in paper, and when the paper was torn away there was the glitter of golden sovereigns.

"You'd better count them, Mr. Crane," he went on, handing the bag to the delighted bank manager.

Driver Hall saw the game was up.

"I'm not the only guilty one——" he began.

"No," replied the superintendent sharply, "but the receiver is worse than the thief. And the thief is your brother-in-law, Guard Franklin. I'll wire at once to have him arrested at Woodhurst, and, meanwhile, these two gentlemen will wait on you."

And there stepped forward a couple of railway detectives, one of them holding a pair of handcuffs.

As we passed out and through the cleaning sheds we discovered the lost link in the chain. In raking out the fires of Number 218 a small brass lock tumbled through the grating. The driver had thrown the black bag of Mr. Crane into the furnace after transferring the cash from it, thinking to destroy all evidence.

All came out exactly as I had anticipated. Franklin and Hall had plotted together and planned the robbery very cleverly. When the train entered the tunnel, Franklin stepped out of his van, slipped along the footboard, and put his hand in at the window of the carriage containing the bag.

The only thing he could not be quite certain about was whether he should find the window shut, in which case he would have had to unlock the door.

Prepared for such an emergency he carried his key in his hand, but accidentally dropped it. It was the fact of his not unlocking the door himself at Stoveley, but calling up a porter, that gave me the idea of looking for the key in the tunnel.

Meanwhile Driver Hall was on the lookout to receive the bag as the train rushed by him, and had sent his fireman under the engine to keep him out of the way. As the train came running in Guard Franklin held the bag out of his window on the off side, and Hall clutched at it as it passed, but in doing so the card was torn off and fell unnoticed.

Then the driver calmly put the bag in his tool chest and transferred the money when the fireman was conveniently out of sight later on in the day. Needless to say Mr. Crane was very much more relieved at the end of that day than at the beginning of it.

[Next Week: "The Case of the 'Bluebell.'"]

HER GOOD REASON.

"DON'T you wish," he asked, looking soulfully into her eyes, "that the tunnel on this line was ten times as long?"

"No," she answered.

It struck him like a dash of cold water in the face. Instantly it dawned upon him that she no longer loved him.

"They always turn on the lights when coming to the long tunnels," she added, "and they don't for the short ones."

CLERGYMAN: "Boys, don't you know you must not gamble?"

Boy: "It ain't wrong for we learnt this piece in school to-day:

"The bonny Spring has come at last
With fern and flower and bramble.
And on the common decked in green
The frisky kids do gambol."

"GOODNESS, child, don't eat so many sweets!"

"But, ma, you said I could have some sweets for taking that medicine."

"Of course, but so much will make you ill again."

"Well, ma, then I can take some more medicine and have some more sweets, can't I?"

Racing to be Eaten.

How we Obtain our Early Supplies of Fruit, Fish, and Vegetables.

The First New Potatoes come from the Canary Islands.

And Turkeys are Kept in Ice from One Year to Another.

ALTHOUGH from an early date in February English hothouse-grown strawberries are to be purchased, yet there is always a strong competition between salesmen at Covent Garden to secure the first of the outdoor crop.

These come from Plougastel, six miles from Brest, and are usually ripe about the third week in May.

As soon as news comes that the first pickings are ready, a special service of boats is put on between Brest and Plymouth. A small fast boat sails each evening and carries, not only strawberries, but green peas and other early vegetables.

In an average year 2,500 tons of strawberries arrive in Plymouth from Plougastel, and about 400 tons of peas. The greater part of these go straight on to London in special vans attached to fast trains, and are in Covent Garden within just over twenty-four hours of their being picked. The earliest fruit brings 1s. 3d. a pound to the grower.

Within three days the price is down to 10d., and about ten days later the same fruit may be bought for 3d. a pound in Plymouth fruit shops. It is easy to imagine the competition between the different growers

to ripen their berries first.

Early in November of each year a special train is put on between Marseilles and Boulogne, which enables the flower grower of the Riviera to land the product of his garden in London within thirty-six hours of the time the blossoms have been picked.

After the New Year the same train continues to run up till about the beginning of March, bringing cucumbers, extra early potatoes, and other new vegetables to the London market.

From Boulogne also come all of London's early cauliflowers. The shipments are extraordinary. One vessel this year carried seventy tons, representing 63,000 heads of this delicious vegetable.

Although we get oranges from Brazil and California, apples from Canada and Tasmania, and pears from Georgia and South Australia, yet the great bulk of the fruit we fail to grow for ourselves comes from the Mediterranean. This trade centres chiefly at London and Hull.

Hull gets 250,000 boxes of Valencia oranges a year, and acts as a distributing centre of this fruit to Scandinavia and Denmark. Hull also gets the bulk of the soft fruit trade from the Continent—that is to say, currants,

raspberries, cherries, and plums.

The Mediterranean trade is now no longer worked by the old-time fruit schooners, but by regular lines of fine fast steel steamers, which call at Malta, Tripoli, Alexandria, Jaffa, Larnica, Limasol, Alexandretta, Smyrna, and possibly one or two other ports, and then return full speed to England.

As a matter of fact, French vegetables and fruit get into the London market a great deal more rapidly than most of the English produce. The Great Western and the Great Eastern are almost the only ones of our railways who do anything to help the English growers to get his perishable products quickly to market.

Down near Penzance the acres of cauliflowers and similar early vegetables are extending year by year, and the Great Western runs special trains loaded with these and with flowers from the Scilly Islands up to London.

The earliest English strawberries come also from the south-west, chiefly from the valley of the Tamar. They also come to London by express train. Our earliest hot-house grapes come to London from Worthing. Special trains are run on Tuesdays and Fridays

to bring this produce to market.

The earliest plums come from Bordeaux, and there is always great expectation of the first shipment, especially if the cherry crop has been poor. The Great Hall in the centre of Covent Garden will be piled one morning in mid-July with the round baskets in which these plums arrive, and they are auctioned off at very good prices.

From France also come our first red currants, packed in flat baskets with cross handles, while early cherries are also French in their origin. They do not, however, command the prices of the first English crop from Kent. These may bring 9d. a pound wholesale.

The present year has seen a record shipment of peaches. In July last the experiment was made of sending several hundred boxes of Elberta peaches from Georgia to England. They were sent to New York by fast boat from Savannah, shipped across on the *St. Paul*, and reached London within fourteen days from the time they were picked.

The *St. Paul* also carried 10,000 boxes of California apples, pears, peaches, and other fruit, which did the 6,000 mile trip in the record time of thirteen days.

Christmas causes a certain amount of racing for the market. Yorkshire rhubarb, grown by the aid of waste steam from the woollen factories, used to be a great feature of the Christmas market. The first stalks used to fetch 3d. each wholesale. The trade has, however, fallen off of late years, hurt by the increasing importation of Canadian apples.

Valencia orange-growers always make a strong effort to get the best of their shipments ready for the Christmas market. It will be noticed that these oranges seem suddenly to become sweeter and more juicy just at Christmas time. This is because the fruit has been picked less green than usual, and sent over by special fast boats.

Fowls and turkeys used to be fattened specially for the Christmas market, particularly in Norfolk, killed two days beforehand in the very pink of condition, and then their owners would frequently drive many miles to catch a main line express, and so deliver their products

in the very nick of time.

This practice is almost dead, for poultry can now be fattened by machinery, killed whenever at their best, and then placed in cold storage. Turkeys lie for months in the great London ice houses, to be sold as "fresh killed" when December comes.

At present the very choicest of Christmas turkeys come from Touraine, in France. The last shipment before Christmas is always sent by special train.

Before 1890 our earliest potatoes came from the Channel Islands about the beginning of April. This is no longer the case. The first supply is now drawn from the Canary Islands in February, and March sees the coming of Maltese potatoes.

One hundred and forty big steamers, each able to carry 50,000 to 150,000 carcases, are constantly at work, bringing meat to our shores. There is always much competition to get the first frozen lamb from New Zealand to Britain. It is probable, however, that few epicures would be able to distinguish frozen meat of 1903 from meat killed and frozen in 1902.

There was great excitement at Deptford in January last, when the embargo on the import of live cattle from the Argentine was removed. Four big steamers raced across the Atlantic with large cargoes. It was expected that the result would be a considerable drop in the price of meat in London, but this hope was disappointed, at least, so far as

the consumer was concerned.

Thirty years ago there was always a tremendous race from Shanghai to London between the tea clippers. The voyage has been accomplished within seventy-five days—an almost incredible speed for a sailing vessel. Now that most of our tea is grown in India and Ceylon, it comes to us by steam in a month, and there can no longer be any object in rushing the new crop in.

There is, however, still a tea race. This occurs every year across Siberia. It begins in December, and within the first three weeks of January so many as 19,000 sleighs, laden with tea, pass through the town of Tomsk on their 6,000 mile journey westward.

One horse draws five sleighs, each of which holds five bales of tea. About seventy sleighs go to a caravan, and the caravans race against one another to their destination. The drivers sleep in their sleighs, and only stop to feed or change horses.

WHAT WE ARE COMING TO.

"DID I ever say all that?" he asked despondingly, as she replaced the phonograph on the corner of the mantel-piece.

"You did."

"And you can grind it out of that machine whenever you choose?"

"Certainly."

"And your father is a lawyer?"

"Yes."

"Mabel, when can I place the ring on your finger, and call you my wife?"

BOOTBLACK: "Polish your boots, sir?"

Swell: "No, confound you!"

Bootblack: "Polish your manners, sir?"

"So she's going to lecture on how to manage a husband, is she? How many husbands has she had herself?"

"Why, she's never been married."

WIFE: "The Swintons are going to move out of this neighbourhood, after being here a year."

Husband: "That's strange. All the people are just getting to know them now."

Wife: "Yes; that's why they are going."

TOMMY: "I'm rather sorry you are engaged to sister."

Suitor: "Why?"

Tommy: "Well, now you make love to her openly, but before it was a great deal more fun to watch you through the keyhole."

Do you want to be a social success? Then get the January ROYAL MAGAZINE, and read the article: "Five o'Clock Tea."

QUESTIONS WORTH ANSWERING

Half-a-crown is paid for every Question used, and two guineas a column for Replies.

REPLIES.

AGRICULTURAL ANTS.

What Insects Sow, Reap, and Store Seeds? (6814.)

The agricultural ant, a native of Texas, as studied by Dr. Lincecum, affords a striking example of the provident application of intelligence and skill to provide an assured supply of suitable food. Each year the various communities of these active little creatures are roused to a state of commotion as soon as their planting season sets in. In companies they hasten to the scene of their labours, which is always a space in front of their ant-hills.

Here they first clear a patch of ground, working in a circular direction. Having diligently removed every obstruction to the free course of cultivation, and turned up the portion of soil selected for that purpose, they produce from their stores and sow the seeds of certain plants. As these ripen, the ants come forth to reap and gather in their harvest.

Bound up in diminutive sheaves, the grain is next transported by combined effort to granaries belonging to each community, where the seeds, carefully separated from husks, are stored for future use.

It sometimes happens that the seed in these underground garners becomes affected by damp, and when this is the case it is regularly brought out and exposed to the sun from time to time, and as systematically housed again when dry.

INSECT MIMICS.

What Insect Adopts the Cleverest Disguise? (6819.)

A well-known naturalist tells us of an insect in Nicaragua so completely disguised as a leaf, that a whole host of the ants who prey upon it actually ran across it without recognising it as their food. Mr. Sclater noted in South America another insect—one of the *Membracidæ*—which not only mimicked the leaf-cutting ant for its own protection, but, like its model, carried in its jaws a fragment of leaf about the size of a sixpence.

Even more wonderful is the disguise of the mantis of Java, which turns itself into so exact a semblance of an orchis flower, that the insects upon which it feeds visit it in hope of a feast, but remain to furnish one.

The *Heliconidæ* butterflies, which are avoided by all insect-eating creatures, are exactly imitated by another class, which are so good to eat that they did not thus assume a protective disguise they would be extirpated, and they do so to such perfection that even expert naturalists sometimes cannot distinguish them. Another authority mentions a small beetle which turned itself into so good a copy of a wasp that he was afraid to touch it with his fingers.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Was the Name Mary ever a Bar to Marriage? (6822.)

"Mary," as a Christian name, was held in very singular veneration during the mediæval ages, and in some parts of Europe there existed a superstitious reluctance among men to marry anyone who chanced to have been so christened; or the bride-elect was at least required to change this name for some other of less sanctity.

All Marys were at one time believed to be invested with extraordinary powers in connection with the affairs of life. Bearing the same name as the Blessed Virgin, they were considered worthy of more than common consideration, and their personal influence over their husbands especially was unusual. Hence, many men sought authoritative ordinances forbidding their wives to be known as Mary. Sovereigns, in some cases, dreading subjection to their partners, showed a marked distaste for Marys.

Thus, Alfonso the Fourth of Castile, when on the point of wedding a Moorish maiden, made it a condition of the marriage that at her baptism, as a recent convert to Christianity, she should not take this name. In the articles settled for the union of Ladislas of Poland with Marie de Nevers there was a clause which bound this princess to change her name to Aloysa. Casimir the First of Poland, who married Mary, daughter of the Duke of Russia, required of her a similar sacrifice to popular sentiment.

THE STEEPEST SIMPLE GRADIENT.

What is the Steepest Gradient on any Ordinary Railway? (6821.)

The Zurich-Utliberg line, in Switzerland, has the severe gradient of 7 per cent., which is the maximum of simple adhesion on a line where no recourse is had to clip brakes or steel cables, such as are now in use on many mountain heights, where the gradient is often as much as 24 per cent.

The ordinary limit of grades on railways is one in sixty, though as steep a slope as one in thirty can be worked with perfect safety. One of the steepest on an English line is the Lickey incline, on the Birmingham and Bristol section of the Midland. This has a gradient of 1 in 37½ for a length of more than two miles, and traffic has passed over it with perfect regularity, safety, and success for many years.

The following table is of interest, and to the point:

Line.	Locality.	Maximum Gradient.
Zurich-Utliberg	Switzerland	7 per cent.
Oroya	Andes	6 "
Bindelein	Switzerland	5 "
Poti-Tiflis	Caucasus	4½ "
Darjeeling	Himalayas	4 "

The resistance, at 25lb. per ton level way, is 137lb. per ton on a 5 per cent. gradient.

GRASS-WIDOWS.

What is the Origin of the Term "Grass-widow"? (6824.)

In olden days this term carried with it reproach, but in its modern use the title "grass-widow" is applied to a wife who is temporarily separated from her husband. For example, one may be in India and the other in England.

It may signify by derivation a widow by courtesy, from the French *grace*. Some, however, say that according to old Canon Law widows who had remained for a full year in that estate were held to be under the particular protection of God, and were therefore spoken of as "widows of grace."

A more humorous idea was attached to the term during the gold mania in California. It was then no uncommon thing for a man to place his wife and family as boarders in some household, while he himself went off to the goldfields. This came to be called putting his wife to grass, from the analogy of turning a horse into the fields for a time, and she was commonly spoken of as a "grass-widow."

WHY CUT APPLES TURN COLOUR.

Why do Apples Quickly Turn Colour when Biting or Cut? (6828.)

This rapid change of colour is due to chemical action on the exposed surface of the apple after the free admission of oxygen, and not, as was once supposed, to the presence of micro-organisms; for if apple pulp is sterilised and filtered the same thing happens. The juice of an apple not only contains water, sugar, and various acids, but a starch which ferments when exposed to the air.

Lindet holds that the fermenting matter, as well as the acids, are in different cells in the uncut apple, but are brought into contact as soon as it is cut. This is, however, not to the point, as the fermenting matter can only attack the aromatic body in the presence of oxygen. So long as the skin of the apple is whole no change can take place, but immediately this is wounded the oxygen begins its work, carbon dioxide is evolved, and the reddish-brown appearance sets in, especially on unripe fruit.

A Thousand Curious Things Worth Knowing.

This is a carefully indexed selection of the most interesting and instructive information from the Replies which have appeared on this page. A valuable book of reference—containing 468 pages.

At all railway bookstalls and booksellers for 1s., or post free for 1s. 2d. from the Publisher, 17 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED.

Which Plant has the Smallest Seed in Proportion to its Size? (6825.)

The mustard plant—*Sinapis nigra*—grown all over the East, and used both in the Talmud and the Koran as proverbial for anything minute, has the smallest seed in proportion to its size. Though somewhat larger than the seed of poppy and rue, its after-growth far surpasses these. So minute is it that it takes fifty seeds to make one grain. Easily shed, it often springs up to the detriment of other crops. The charlock of our own fields, a similar plant, affords no comparison to what the hot countries show of different varieties of mustard seed.

Travellers tell us three things by which its size can be judged. Men have been known to climb into its branches, in Chili to ride on horseback under it, and in Spain large ovens are heated with its dry wood.

Probably it was for these reasons that it was chosen to illustrate by parable the growth of the Church. In Palestine it commonly attains a height of ten feet. The tropical mustard tree—*Salvadora Persica*—is not a native of the Holy Land, though it has been found in the Dead Sea basin.

PRIMITIVE LANGUAGE.

What were Probably the Earliest Forms of Language? (6825.)

The earliest form of language was probably merely expressive of personal pain or pleasure, such prattle as a baby uses before it can talk. Later, as Haeckel and Darwin indicate, would come simple sounds serving to designate the nearest objects and most pressing wants. Then these sounds would combine into words, and short sentences, and at this stage we can leave theory, and judge by actual example.

The pigmies of Central Africa, and other primitive races, have even now advanced no further. Captain Burrows says of the pigmies that they have nothing to indicate religion, family ties, sports, or home. The only form in which their language has developed is in connection with hunting, in which they are experts, and this curiously confirms our conceptions of Palæolithic man.

Some 400 such records have been collected, the oldest, according to Dr. Nuesch, dating back some 20,000 years. These indicate that the chase, and that alone, was the chief interest of our earliest ancestors, and as that is so, we may assume that the first forms of language had reference to food, and other necessaries, which this provided.

WHISTLING JUGS.

What are Whistling Jugs? (6829.)

Whistling jugs are curious relics of a very ancient drinking custom. All the northern nations set great stress upon a man's power to take off his liquor without putting down the glass or beaker, and in Saxon graves old ale buckets have been found made without foot or stand, so that the drinker could not rest them upon the board until they were emptied.

But even after that was accomplished the hardy drinker was expected still to have breath to spare, and the whistling jugs, a comparatively modern invention, were intended to indicate this. Many of them were made by German silversmiths—though they are also to be seen in earthenware—during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and their form was such that, when the contents of the jug had been imbibed, a whistle was uncovered, through which the drinker might blow if he were able.

The most advanced type of all had a little windmill, besides the whistle, which worked a dial showing the power of the blow. Sometimes an ordinary whistle was laid on the table, and won by the last toss-pot who could get a sound from it.

QUESTIONS.

6861. When were English coasts first defended by a fleet?
6862. What were the derivations of the words Dragoon and Hussar?
6863. When was indiarubber first introduced?
6864. Has the Great Seal ever been used for cooking purposes?
6865. What is the derivation of the Papal Bull?
6866. When and where did savings banks begin?
6867. How are queen bees made?
6868. Do trees check or promote disease?
6869. What gave rise to oratorios?
6870. What is the origin of the strawberry leaf on coronets?

CONDITIONS.

We shall be glad to receive from our readers replies to any of the questions asked here. Each reply must bear the writer's name and address. We shall print a selection of replies to each question, and shall pay at the rate of £2 2s. a column for all matter printed. The same reader may send replies to any number of queries, whether his own or not. Envelopes should be marked "Replies" in the top left-hand corner, and answers to the questions in any issue of the paper must reach us by first post on the Monday of the week following that for which the paper is dated. Payment will only be made for replies published. Authorities on which replies are based must be given where possible. Half-a-crown will be paid on publication for every question used which is considered worthy of insertion.

"Must I go to school again, mother?"

"Of course, dear."

"Why, mother, I heard you tell father last night that I knew a lot too much."

Mr. Winks (looking over the paper): "Cheap Drug and Co. are selling all sorts of patent medicines at half-price."

Mrs. Winks: "Just our luck. There isn't anything the matter with any of us."

"What is it, dear?" asked his wife, passing her cool hand over his troubled brow; "what is on your mind?"

"Nothing," answered the poet, mournfully, gazing at the blank sheet of paper before him; "nothing, I can assure you."

"Now, Mr. Peck," said Mr. Spudds to his grocer, "you must not try to persuade me that this Java coffee really came from Java, because I know better."

"I would not try to deceive you, sir," replied Mr. Peck, "and I will add that even our Vienna bread did not come from Austria."

THE ESTABLISHED ESTABLISHED 1871.

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How Those in Moderate Circumstances Get Their Yuletide Luxuries.

Cards and Toys Can be had by Weekly Payments.

Also Drives and Unlimited Hairdressing.

PLACARDS bearing the mystic words, "Our Christmas Club has now commenced," "Join Our Christmas Club," and other legends to the same effect, make their appearance annually, at or about the beginning of September, in hundreds of small shops situated in working-class neighbourhoods.

The Christmas Club—so-called—is, briefly stated, an arrangement whereby customers may deposit with the obliging shopkeeper sums of from 3d. to 5s. per week, and at Christmas time (but not before) take out the total value of their deposits in groceries, poultry, meat, tobacco, spirituous liquors or puddings, as the case may be.

It is by no means an infrequent occurrence for a Christmas "clubman" or "clubwoman" to develop an intense thirst a week or so before the festive season arrives, but, beg he or she never so humbly, the odds are forlorn indeed against their obtaining even a "tanner" from the keeper of the "club." If the shopkeeper understands his business, only in cases of genuine distress will he "pay out" before Christmas week,

or otherwise than in kind.

The number of shopkeepers who run clubs, "in order to insure their Christmas trade," is every year on the increase. The object for which members will sometimes save their money may seem extraordinary to the uninitiated.

Imagine, for example, some hundreds of sane persons regularly every week depositing with a stationer 3d., or 4d., or 6d., in order that, three months later, they may obtain—apparently free of cost—Christmas cards to send to their relations and friends. Yet there are many stationers who derive considerable profit from their "Christmas Card Clubs."

An enterprising barber in the Mile End Road for some weeks before Christmas displayed a notice in his saloon, to the effect that the nobility and gentry of the district might, by depositing with him the sum of three-halfpence weekly, obtain for themselves, their wives and offspring (number unlimited), as many shaves, hair-cuts, singeings, and shampoos as they might desire during Christmas week.

A certain livery stable keeper, with premises not a hundred miles away from Waterloo Station, advertised well in advance that his "Christmas Four-in-Hand Club" had now commenced. Members deposit sixpence per week—or, if they are likely to be accompanied by their wives or "donahs," tenpence per week—and this

insures them "a glorious drive down,

through magnificent scenery, on a splendid coach, drawn by four spanking bays," to a certain Metropolitan racecourse where, every Boxing Day, an ever-popular programme is run through.

Apparently as an afterthought, the following artistic touch has been added to the "Four-in-Hand Club" proprietor's notice: "P.S.—Patrons are respectfully informed that these coaches have been patronised by ROYALTY."

"Plum Pudding Clubs" are, in London, comparatively common, and in connection with these the accommodating shopkeeper-club proprietor frequently supplies his would-be members with a table, the study of which well repays attention.

The figures are arranged on a sort of sliding scale, and make clear at a glance to the dullest intellect the amount of the weekly subscription needed to provide for Christmas Day "two substantial helpings of the richest pudding on earth for two, three, four, five or six persons."

Anybody may think he can guess the nature of a "Goose Club," but "Goose Clubs" are not always what they seem. Some gentlemen, it appears, deem the birds "too rich," while careful housewives are

apt to consider them "extravagant."

A Battersea grocer and poultry dealer displayed with evident pride a lengthy list, the preparation of which had obviously cost him much trouble. Do what one would, a mere glance at it summoned up unpleasant visions of long-ago lessons and hated measures and tables committed to memory at school. The list read somewhat in this wise:

1 Ordinary three months' subscription=1 goose (about 15lbs.).
1 Goose (about 15lbs.)=1 turkey (small) and 1 chicken.
1 Turkey (small)=2 fine ducks or 2 chickens and 1 Christmas pudding.
1 Duck=1 bottle of whisky or 12 bottles of Bass.
1 Small Xmas pudding=1 bottle of port or 12 bottles of mineral water, and so on.

In very many of the London suburbs "Christmas Clothes Clubs" abound. Here, by means of a small weekly subscription—sometimes extending over very many months—members may, on Christmas morning, blossom out into gorgeous waistcoats, ties that might almost have been bought in Piccadilly, silk hats, patent leather boots, and trousers of "art shades." Lady members usually go in for millinery and striking blouses or something "really chic" in furs.

Working men, with young families, are ardent supporters of the "Christmas Toy Club," for should the breadwinner have the misfortune to be out of a job at Christmas time, he does not like it to make any difference to the youngsters at home.

Bachelors of the same station in life patronise their favourite tobacconist's "club," and as a consequence, when Christmas comes, are lavish with their presents of tobacco, cigarettes, and cigars.

A certain Scottish chemist, recently settled in the West of London, was not slow to appreciate the possibilities of Christmas Clubs in connection with his own line of business. Last year he launched on a startled neighbourhood a "Christmas Physic Club," but it did not prove

the great success he anticipated.

"People said they did not fancy the idea of meeting trouble half-way," he explained to the writer; "but this year I put up a notice in June, and threw in the free extraction of teeth during the five weeks immediately following Christmas Day. That fetched them! At any rate, by the end of September this year I succeeded in getting eighty-four subscribers!"

"Christmas Clubs" which end in "hampers"—nature of contents not specifically stated, but well enough known to would-be purchasers—are often in full swing quite early in August. These hampers contain an assortment of bottles filled with whisky, brandy, gin, and sherry, and other seasonable liquors.

The proprietors of clubs of this nature—and in London alone their number must be legion—would appear to be diffident about inviting customers—in black and white, at all events—to "Join Our Drink Club"! Besides, the expression "Christmas Club" sounds better, and covers a multitude of sins.

"LOVE!"

She calls me "sweet" and "darling,"
And oh! such pretty names,
When I am with her, no one
But me attention claims.

She takes me in her arms, too—
How happy then am I!
And tells me that she loves me—
Quite careless who is nigh.

And when she lets me kiss her,
And other fellows see,
It fills those other fellows
With jealousy—of me!

She says "they're all such puppies!"—
And what am I to do?
I cannot contradict her—
For I'm a puppy too!

A GENTLEMAN who discovered that he was standing on a lady's train, had the presence of mind to remark: "Though I may not have the power to draw an angel from the skies, I have pinned one to the earth." The lady excused him.

"BUT why did you not send for the doctor next door when you became suddenly ill?" asked his friend.

"You forget," said the sufferer, "that I have been learning to play the cornet recently. I had my doubts."

"ALLOW me to lay this little gift at your feet."

"No, no; I never take any presents from my gentlemen friends."

"But this is only a copy of my poems."

"Oh, in that case I don't mind. I thought it was something of value."

WIFE (standing with her husband before shop-window): "Here are so many things that would give pleasure to your wife, and that you might purchase for her; but, no matter however many beautiful things there are, you seem quite indifferent, as though you saw nothing."

Husband: "A sure proof of my affection for you, for love is blind."

FIRST CHAPPIE: "Who is that shabby-looking man you just bowed to?"

Second Chappie: "Oh, that's an author who stuck to pure literature—said he would starve before he would write down to the masses."

"Ah, too bad! And who is that gorgeous-looking swell who is crossing the street?"

"That's the soap and pill poet—writes most of the rhyming advertisements that you see in the papers."

BRITONS IN FOREIGN FEATHERS.

Subjects of the King who are Rulers in Other Countries.

THERE are many Britons who might walk about London unnoticed and unimportant, yet directly they stepped into foreign territory would receive almost regal honours.

For instance, if Sir Charles Brooke were to give an order at a London shop, or stay at a London hotel, he would simply be accorded the respect usually extended towards a titled gentleman. Yet he is nothing less than an Oriental monarch, the Rajah of Sarawak, ruling over half a million people, and a country as big as Scotland and Wales together. In his own country, of course, he enjoys all the honours of an Eastern monarch.

Sir Thomas Salter Pyne might be amongst us in this country and excite no more attention than an ordinary citizen. Yet in Afghanistan this gentleman is, next to the Ameer himself, by far the most important personage in the country.

He is to all intents and purposes an Afghan potentate, controlling thousands of natives, and superintending practically everything in the direction of modern progress that now exists in that country. He has started, and is at the head of factories for the manufacture of guns, rifles, ammunition, swords, soap, candles, and almost every kind of merchandise. He has also taught coining and distilling.

If we were at war with Afghanistan, a Britisher would practically hold in his hands the material power of that country; for, though a British subject, Sir Thomas is a servant of the Ameer, whose ambassador he has been on more than one occasion, in difficulties that have arisen between the Afghan and Indian Governments.

If war broke out, he would find himself strangely placed between his King and his master.

Liverpool possesses in its midst a real live Sheikh-ul-Islam of native birth. This is Mr. William Henry Abdullah Quilliam, who is head of the Mohammedans of the British Isles.

As a sheikh, he is a very great personage in Turkey, where the Sultan pays him particular honour, and also in Afghanistan, Persia and Morocco, and North Africa generally.

When not fulfilling his great Moslem functions, he practises as a solicitor and commissioner of oaths in Liverpool.

There are many members of the British nobility who are much greater personages abroad than they are at home. For instance, the Earl of Denbigh is a mere aristocrat here, but in Austria he is treated as a Royalty, one of his titles being that of Count of Hapsburg, the name of the Imperial House of Austria. Consequently, when the earl is in Vienna, he is accorded Royal honours.

Melfort, a Scottish loch, has the strange distinction of giving a higher title in France than it does in Britain. Here it is only an earldom, and is combined with that of Perth, giving to its holder the title of Earl of Perth and Melfort. In France, however, his lordship promptly becomes Duke of Melfort, by right of a title conferred on him by Louis XIV.

When the Earl of Clancarty goes to Holland he becomes a marquis. As a Dutch peer he is the Marquis of Heusden.

The Earl of Newburgh is an enormous grandee in Italy. He is a prince, Marquis Bandini, Lord of Varana, in the Roman States, and respectively a duke and a count of Naples.

The Duke of Wellington is a nobleman of the Netherlands and Spain as well as of the United Kingdom.

In the former nobility he has the title of Prince of Waterloo.

In Spain he is a count, a marquis, and a duke, as well as being a grandee of the first class, which gives him certain great privileges as belonging to the highest rank of the nobility, and having a seat in the Senate in his own right.

The Duke of Marlborough is also a foreign nobleman in his own right. His title in Austria is that of a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, and Prince of Mindenheim.

The Sultan of Morocco employs several Britons, who took an active part in the protection of their Imperial Master from the rebels. Of these was Sir Harry Maclean.

This gentleman possesses the title of "Kaid" or Governor in Morocco, is a colonel in the Sultan's Bodyguard, and the chief drill instructor to the army.

ARE YOU GENEROUS? ARE YOU MEAN?

ARE YOU CLEVER? ARE YOU DULL?

Whatever you are it is as well to know other things concerning yourself, so send a specimen of your handwriting, together with six penny stamps and a stamped addressed envelope to RANKE, 32 Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C. A reliable delineation of your character will reach you in return—this will give you the required information.

"The Strange Errands of a Messenger Boy" in the ROYAL MAGAZINE, are getting more and more exciting. Read the January Errand.

Preferential Pars

Mice Cause Bankruptcy.

A Clacton grocer, named Enoch Jones, attributed his failure partly to the swarming of mice, which ate biscuits and made goods unsaleable. He said he killed on an average twenty a day.

Ancient Cities.

Rome is 2,684 years old, Marseilles claims to be 2,500 years old, and Cassel, in Prussia, 1,000.

Awkward Visitor.

Hostesses of house-parties are suffering from the present mania for eccentric pets. One, a lady, insists on accommodation being found for her pet boa-constrictor.

Not Dangerous.

Consumers of sweetmeats need not be alarmed when they hear that Orthohydroxycinnamicanhydride is used in the confectionery trade. It is but a scientific name for coumarin, the active principle of the Tonkin bean.

Wouldn't Take Gold.

A Maori at Manaia, New Zealand, a few weeks ago refused to accept his pension money in gold. He had never seen the metal, and, since the post office had not enough silver to pay him, he walked away, leaving the gold on the counter.

Sunday No Day.

A breach of promise case brought the other day by a young woman living in Philadelphia was dismissed upon her admitting that the proposal of marriage was made on a Sunday. Under the laws of Pennsylvania a contract made on Sunday cannot be enforced.

Phonograph to Conduct Services.

A provincial contemporary recently contained an advertisement for a preaching phonograph wanted by a certain Wesleyan chapel, and stipulating that each record should have one distinct service, including chapters, five hymns, two prayers, a sermon, and a benediction.

Other Countries, Other Manners.

The Siamese prince, who in the early nineties was a member of what was, then, at any rate, the most cosmopolitan college in Oxford, found it very difficult to reconcile his autocratic notions with the practice of undergraduates. Being asked by the captain of the boats to go down and do a little "tubbing," he drew himself up to his full five feet and replied: "When I go on the river at Bangkok, I have eighty slaves to row me."

Picture Postcard Screens.

Screens covered with picture postcards are becoming popular. They are very effective decorations, and have quite an educational value for nurseries and schoolrooms. After the cards have been artistically arranged and pasted on the panels of the screen, they should be varnished or covered with glass. One ingenious schoolboy has decorated a screen in this manner, and below the frieze of the postcards he has pasted on a dado of stamps and postmarks.

How Singers Keep in Form.

The diet of a singer has to be as carefully considered and limited as that of an athlete in training. Madame Melba is devoted to sweets, but she never allows herself one. Madame Nordica confesses to sometimes having a perfectly childish craving for an abundant feast of sweets and pastries, yet she denies herself both. Madame Patti has sacrificed practically everything to her voice, and she says that she owes its preservation to the fact that she never for one moment forgets that she is a singer.

Gun-barrels from Nails.

Horseshoe nails kicked about the roads of the world by horses innumerable, are far from the useless fragments we might think them. Gunmakers tell us there is no iron so well fitted for their purpose as that derived from horseshoe nails, and similar worn fragments. The nails, made originally of the best stuff obtainable, receive from the constant pounding of the horse's feet on hard surfaces a peculiar annealing and toughening, making them a most perfect substance for the manufacture of the finest gun-barrels.

Died of Soldier's Heart.

When the sudden deaths of a great number of soldiers were being inquired into it was given in evidence that such men have fallen victims to a peculiar form of heart complaint, known as "soldier's heart." This is a disease that has been set up entirely by the pressure upon the heart of the leather straps that used to cross the soldiers' chests. It came upon the authorities as a surprise some few years ago to know that great numbers of fine men became incapacitated solely through the pressure on the heart of the uniform straps, and pensioner after pensioner now dies off as a result of wearing these straps years ago.

Microbes in Ice.

A medical authority has found 21,000 disease-producing germs in a melted hailstone. It has also been shown that the natural ice supplied to most cities contains multitudes of disease-producing microbes, including typhoid fever bacteria and other equally deadly germs. Thousands of persons are made ill by the use of iced water, not only because of the germ which the ice contains, but because of the gastric debility induced by the large quantities of cold water. The gastric juice destroys germs, but when the stomach is deluged with iced water the gastric glands cease to secrete hydrochloric acid, to the presence of which the gastric juice owes its germicidal properties.

Looks Won the Case.

A tramway company in St. Paul, Minnesota, is appealing against the verdict of a jury on the ground that the girl plaintiff won her case by "a pretty face and a picture hat."

Dull Swedish Sailors.

A commission has been formed to investigate the condition of the Swedish sailors and marines who, it is asserted, are afflicted with "a chronic incapacity to understand and quickly execute orders."

Something Accomplished!

M. Richard, a town councillor of Le Mans (France) recently proposed that as many trees should be planted along an avenue of the town as there were councillors, "to prove that they had at least done something."

Coal Worth 8d. a Ton.

The original worth of coal bears no relation to its price to the consumer. In the colliery it may be considered as worth 8d. per ton. Then every movement from there to the top of the pit entails a cost. At the top of the pit its value is 8s. 6d.; this becomes 11s. free on board. Then it springs to 22s. in the London market, and is valued at 30s. in Genoa.

Negresses as Detectives.

Negress private detectives are being employed by an agency in Georgia. The women are stated to be adepts in the work required of them, as they are intelligent, patient, trustworthy, and as cunning as foxes. Besides, the individual shadowed cannot, as a rule, tell one negress from another. Lady detectives who are white can, it seems, be readily "spotted" by the parties they are watching.

Parchment Gloves.

Quite a good price is paid by a French firm for old parchments of all descriptions. They have a process for removing the ink, and eventually the cleaned stuff comes back to us as finest French kid-gloves. The clippings left when the gloves are made are not wasted either. Mixed with clippings of vellum and leather, they are boiled down for size. And the coarse shavings, with odds and ends of seal and other skins, come in handy for filling cheap cricket-balls.

Worshipping in Shirt Sleeves.

At a chapel in Birmingham recently the remarkable scene was witnessed of a large section of the congregation sitting throughout the service in their shirt-sleeves. Over 500 of them had met at a certain spot before the service, and marched to the chapel headed by a brass band; but on the way they were caught in a thunderstorm and drenched to the skin. On their arrival at the chapel most of them had taken off their coats and hung them to dry over a rail at the end of the church.

No Suppers After Eleven.

Lieutenant-Colonel Robertson, of Bray, co. Wicklow, who served in the first Boer War, is arranging for the introduction of a short Bill into Parliament to legalise the serving of suppers in licensed restaurants in Dublin up to midnight on weekdays. As the law stands in Dublin at present, nobody can be served with a supper on licensed premises after eleven o'clock at night. The proprietor of a restaurant that did supply suppers to theatre-goers after that hour was fined £10 a few weeks ago.

London's Unlucky Policeman.

A member of the N. Division of police is probably the most unlucky individual in the whole London police force. He has now been in the force for five years, and in every one of those years he has either sustained a serious injury or suffered from a serious illness. In the first year of his service he had a very bad attack of pneumonia; in the second year he had his arm broken in trying to stop a runaway horse; in the third year he had a dangerous attack of rheumatic fever; last year he had his nose broken by a refractory prisoner; and this year he was accidentally shot in the neck at the annual police revolver practice.

Boot-laces Made from Eels' Skins.

Most people nowadays hear a lot about the conservation of waste, but, looking through the catalogue of traders of various kinds, it is astounding what a number of eccentric commodities are utilised for trade purposes. The skins of millions of eels are tanned and used as leather for boot-laces; frog-skin has become one of the most beautiful and useful articles known to the binders of fancy books and the makers of fans; walrus whiskers provide the most elegant toothpicks known to the modern man of fashion; and beetles of a certain kind are exported by the hundredweight for use on theatrical dresses.

Much Mother-in-lawed Man.

A certain small town in Bavaria can boast of what may be described as a unique family circle. A shopkeeper resident there, according to a local newspaper, includes among his household three living mothers-in-law, each with a mother of her own, his own mother, his third wife, and four daughters in their teens. The twelve women are reported to live on terms of the greatest amity, and the shopkeeper himself, who is fortunately in good circumstances, professes to be perfectly contented, notwithstanding that he is thus the thirteenth of his family. The incessant banter to which he is subjected he philosophically welcomes as tending only towards the better advertisement of his business.

Where it Rains Horses.

Out in parts of California horses are as numerous as mosquitoes, and when their numbers increase until they become troublesome the farmers resort to an inhuman custom as a means of becoming rid of them. Along the Californian coast are ranges of high cliffs, and towards the edges of these the herds of wild horses are driven. The beasts are lashed furiously by the cattlemen, till out of sheer fright they plunge madly over the cliffs, falling pell-mell in a ghastly heap 200ft. below. To be before the cliffs when this is taking place is to be a witness of one of the most fearful sights in the world. The horses come down in a perfect shower, and all along the beach are piles of bleaching bones.

HUSBANDS BY PROFESSION.

Marriage as a Profitable Occupation for Eligible Young Men.

The other day the following extraordinary advertisement appeared in a newspaper:

"Husband Wanted.—Lady possessing thriving business desires Husband-Manager. Must be experienced, sober, and honest, and able to discharge matrimonial, business, and other duties. Good remuneration, including board. Apply ——"

Suspecting that this was a joke, the writer applied for the post, and discovered to his astonishment that it was absolutely genuine. The agent in charge of the affair said that the advertiser was a wealthy and very eccentric lady, who had recently inherited the business of her father, whose only daughter she was.

Not wishing to sell the concern, for financial and sentimental reasons, she decided to carry it on herself. Finding that there were many matters she could not look after alone, she thought of engaging a manager.

But there were obvious disadvantages to this. Managers usually have an eye to the main chance, and when a woman is in question, have great temptations to feather their own nests. So she decided on marrying, on strictly business grounds.

She wanted a young man who, while occupying the position of husband, would be so far bound to her by necessity, that he would be a trustworthy and capable manager. I did not qualify for the post myself, but on inquiring a week or so later, heard that the vacancy was filled.

A young warehouseman, of good appearance and lots of experience, had taken over the position, and was to start work on the Monday morning following the marriage on the next Saturday. He was to have his own apartments in the house, and to do exactly as he chose at home, while, for a salary of £500 a year, and a certain share in the business, he was to be in absolute control of the undertaking.

There are other sorts of professional husbands who encounter one daily in clubs and theatres. They will candidly admit to you that this is their sole occupation. For instance, an opera singer positively must possess a reliable and capable husband to be able to discharge her professional duties. One of these gentlemen kindly sketched out his daily duties for my benefit.

"I was simply a bank clerk before I took on the position of husband to Madame Scantalini," he said. "Now I am fairly well off. But I have to work. Every morning I must spend a couple of hours accompanying the wife on the piano as she rehearses her songs. I then take her to lunch at a restaurant or friend's house. We next drive to wherever she is singing or has duties to perform—such as 'at homes,' concerts, and the like, where I do the accompanying. We dine, and in the evening, during the season, I have to be in attendance at the opera.

"'What do I do there?' Having delivered her at the stage door, I proceed myself to the auditorium and seek out any friends.

"Can I secure an engagement from Lady Castle for the wife to sing at her next 'At Home'? If so, I diplomatically negotiate the affair. Then there is Jones the concert manager, or Augustus Brown, who is a busy song composer. Can the former book a date for the wife? Is the latter composing any new songs that would suit her, and which he would dedicate to her?

"All these and similar matters occupy me during the performance. After that I adjourn to the bar, armed with excellent cigars, and a little money to buy drinks. Here I meet the critics. A pleasant word to each, a cigar here and there, the offer of a drink, and the thing is done. Next morning's papers specially mention the wife's performance in terms of praise, and after the season is over, her reputation has gone up twenty-five per cent.

"I fill up my spare time writing press notices myself about her performance for papers at home and abroad, with whom I have a certain connection. After the opera is over, I must hurry round behind the scenes with the wife's wraps, and anything she may require; the carriage must be promptly in attendance lest she catch cold, and every arrangement for her comfort is in my hands."

This is fairly representative of the experiences of the professional husband. Nearly every well-known singer possesses this invaluable aid to her work.

Then the professional husband acts as agent when his wife is contemplating a tour. He does all the business, draws up the programmes, engages the other artists, does the advertising, and anything else necessary.

A very well-known actress recently married a less celebrated actor. It was known in Society that they were utterly unsuited for each other in every way, and nobody understood why the match had been arranged.

But those who knew the man were quite aware that he had married for occupation. His wife was far better known than himself. His marriage to her brought his name before the public as it had never appeared before. This was his chance. As the husband of Miss Blank he became quite celebrated. He transacted all her business arrangements, and proved a capable agent.

Then he made the stroke for which he had been aiming. He wrote a piece suited for his wife to play in. It was a success, and made his own reputation. Now he spends all his spare time sketching out new plots and parts for future plays for his wife.

That there is any other than a business relationship between them is not to be supposed for a moment, and everybody recognises that he married for occupation.

"Practice Strokes at Billiards," price 1s., or post free for 1s. 2d. from The Book Publisher, 17 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

This new novel is one of the most entrancing ever written. If you read this page you will have to continue reading to the end.

DR. WYNNE'S REVENGE.

WILLIAM WESTALL'S LAST ROMANCE.

NOTES FOR NEW READERS.

PASSINGFORD RECTORY is a delightful, rambling old house, set in an equally delightful garden. Unfortunately the Rector, Mr. Daryl, who is also its owner, is not too well off, and in consequence he cannot keep up the place so well as he would like.

Besides the Rector and Mrs. Daryl, there is a daughter, Eileen, living at home. She is the apple of her father's eye. One son is in the Army, another at Oxford, while the eldest, Guy, is a more or less briefless barrister, with Parliamentary ambitions, who spends a considerable part of his time at home.

The day this story opens Guy meets with a serious accident in the hunting-field. Mr. Meredith Tilter, the rich Squire of Warcock Hall, who is very fond of Eileen, rides on to break the news of the accident. By the time the necessary preparations have been made the patient himself arrives at the Rectory under the care of Dr. Wynne, a young practitioner, recently come to the neighbouring village of Ryefield.

After some days' attention Wynne manages to set Guy well on the way to recovery. During the period of anxiety he has spent a good deal of time at the rectory, during which he discovers that Mrs. Daryl will do anything for Guy, while between Eileen and her mother there is a certain amount of friction.

He and Eileen meet very frequently, but, not being a marrying man, it does not occur to Doctor Wynne that there is any danger of their falling in love.

When next Wynne goes hunting he meets in the field Tilter, who confides to him his love for Eileen. Only then does Wynne realise that to himself Eileen is becoming dear, though he does not feel that he can offer her a suitable home at present. Tilter proposes and is refused.

Shortly after this two ladies, Mrs. Raven and her daughter, Benita, come to Passingford Rectory as paying guests. They are recommended by a friend of Dr. Wynne, and appear to have plenty of money. Benita becomes very good friends with Wynne, and Eileen is accordingly neglected.

Mrs. Sharples, the doctor's housekeeper, who is quite a character in her way, warns him against falling in love with the girl, advising him to try his luck with Eileen.

Mrs. Daryl thinks that Benita will be a splendid match for Guy; her money will help to further his ambitions. She promises to look after his interests in that direction when he is away.

CHAPTER FIVE.

Dr. Wynne's Proposal.

IT occurred to neither of them that Wynne might be an impediment. Mrs. Daryl regarded him as the harmless, necessary doctor, and imagined that his visits to the rectory were purely professional, his occasional meetings with Benita accidental, an illusion confirmed by the fact that, though Mrs. Raven was loud in his praises, her daughter seldom mentioned his name. Guy, on his part, hardly gave Wynne a thought, and he would have laughed at the idea that Benita Raven might prefer a commonplace country practitioner to a man of his parts, prospects, and family.

Moreover, both he and his mother suspected that Wynne had a weakness for Eileen, and that the feeling was reciprocal, a cause to which they ascribed her treatment of Tilter.

Mr. Tilter called again and again, as Mrs. Daryl thought, fully intending to propose—if he got the chance. But Eileen took care to give him none. If they were left alone together, she either found an excuse for deserting him, or froze him into silence by the coldness of her manner. They did not know that he had already proposed and been refused.

Guy, following his mother's advice, ran down to Passingford as often as he could, though less often than he wished, seeing on these occasions as much of Benita as circumstances permitted, and making himself as agreeable to her as might be.

She, on her part, saw that he admired her, and really seriously, but Wynne had the advantage of being first in the field and always to the fore. They had also tastes in common: both were fond of animals, and he knew as much about dogs and horses as about the *genus homo*, and, though Guy was the more fluent talker, the doctor had a quiet, self-possessed manner that inspired confidence and which ladies liked.

Mrs. Raven positively did not know what she should do without him; he understood her constitution so well. When, as occasionally happened, he did not appear at the appointed time, she was disappointed and Benita became unhappy.

In the meanwhile, Wynne felt that he was in the way of luck. His cure of Guy had proved a good advertisement for him, his acquaintance with the Daryls and the rector's recommendation were bringing him patients of the better class, and the hope that his love would be returned was ripening into certainty. Accident alone, generally in the shape of Mrs. Raven or some other intruder, had prevented him from asking Benita to decide his fate. But one afternoon he found the coast clear and Benita alone.

"Mother is lying down, and, I think, asleep. Shall I waken her?" she asked.

"Not on any account. Nothing is worse for people in your mother's condition than to be suddenly roused from their sleep. I will wait till she wakens," said Wynne.

"How good of you! Very few doctors would be so considerate. We expected you yesterday. Why did not you come?"

"There was an accident at the station, and I could not get away."

"What sort of an accident?"

"A porter got his leg so badly crushed, while shunting, that I had to take it off and stay with him, and within call, the rest of the day."

"How dreadful!" exclaimed Benita, shuddering. She hated to hear of unpleasant things. "Did you ride or drive?"

"Rode. Paddy is at the door."

Paddy was a reputedly vicious horse, which Wynne had bought for an "old song" and so trained that the creature would wait patiently outside a house as long as its master remained inside.

"What a dear old thing! I will give him an apple," said Benita, rising.

"Not now, please. I want to speak to you," put in Wynne significantly, and his eyes shone with a light that made her blush. To cover her confusion, she inquired whether he would like to see some of her Mexican sketches, and, without waiting for an answer, fetched them.

Wynne drew his chair near to hers, and they bent over the sketches silently and with beating hearts. Presently their heads softly collided, and, by a sort of reflex action, his arm stole gently round her waist. Benita, trembling, gave him a look which was at once bashful and arch; their eyes met, then their lips. That rosebud of a mouth was irresistible, and it did not resist.

"Forgive me, darling! I could not help it. If you only knew how much I love you!" said Wynne in an ardent whisper.

"You love me! I thought you did. Oh, I am so glad!" she murmured, nestling up to him.

"And you love me?"

"Of course. Do you think if I did not I would let you——. But that is no reason why you should upset my hair. And just look at my collar! Suppose somebody were to come in? You have loved me from the first. So have I you—almost. At any rate, since we had that ride. You are so clever, and nice, and light complexioned. I like fair people, perhaps because I am dark myself."

"And I like dark people because you are dark, my darling," said Wynne fondly and foolishly, and again he touched with his those rosebud lips.

Just then the door opened unheard, and Mrs. Raven, entering with noiseless tread, beheld a scene which surprised her exceedingly, and roused her to an unwonted energy of expression.

"Well, I never! Good Heavens! 'Pon my word! Why, what, how——. Dr. Wynne, I am astonished. Benita, I am ashamed of you!" she exclaimed.

"It is all right, mother dear. Alfred and I are engaged. I am so glad. Aren't you?" said Benita brightly. Mrs. Raven looked dubious. "You must be glad. Didn't you say that he was the only doctor who understood your constitution, and that you did not know what you should do without him? Now, you are sure of him. Won't you kiss me, and say how pleased you are?" She put her arms round her mother's neck, who gave the kiss, but responded rather incoherently, as though the shock had been rather too much for her and she hardly knew what to say.

Wynne, taking her consent for granted, thanked her warmly, and protested earnestly that it should be the study of his life to make Benita happy.

"Well, as you have settled it so, I suppose I must not say no. I am sure you will be good to the child, Dr. Wynne, and, though I shall be sorry to lose her, it is a comfort to think I shall have a son-in-law who is thoroughly conversant with all my complaints," returned Mrs. Raven, bursting into tears. Then, drying her eyes, she added: "When shall we write to our friends and tell the Daryls?"

"There is no hurry. This is Friday. Let us tell them on Sunday," said Benita. "You will come on Sunday, of course, Alfred?"

"Of course," repeated Wynne with a sunny smile. Then he had to go. The day was waning, and patients were waiting. So was Paddy, who, to while away the time, had pawed a big hole in the gravel. Benita gave him an apple, and walked with her lover to the lodge gates.

On the way thither they met Eileen, and spent a few minutes in talk with her. As we know, she had suspected for some time that something was going on which augured ill for her hopes, and in their glowing faces read confirmation of their fears. For, until Benita appeared on the scene, Eileen had not abandoned the hope of a reconciliation with Wynne, and, now that the worst had happened, she blamed herself more than she blamed him. She thought she had been too hasty, that his keeping away from the rectory might have had some other cause than inconstancy or caprice. Yet she had given him the cold shoulder, and treated him in such a way as to make him believe that she did not care for him, perhaps never had cared for him, thereby throwing him into Benita's arms. She had yielded to a feeling of resentment, instead of listening to the gentler promptings of her heart, and now she reproached herself vehemently and unreasonably, and in the watches of the night shed bitter tears. It added to her troubles that she had to bear the burden of her grief alone and unhelped. There was none from whom she might seek counsel and sympathy, no girl friend to whom she could intrust her secret. Making a confidant of her mother was still more impossible. She would first laugh at Eileen, then scold her and reproach her for not encouraging Tilter, and, though the rector was kindness itself, he had never known what it was to be crossed in love. Besides, how could she tell him that she loved Wynne? He would think her unmaidenly, and perhaps read her a lecture, and Eileen craved for sympathy, not reproof.

But, sympathy or no sympathy, one thing she was resolved upon—that nobody must suspect what was passing in her mind. Cost what it might, she must not let her face betray her thoughts, especially to Benita, who was as sharp as a needle and malicious enough to rejoice in having forestalled a potential rival.

Nevertheless, it was very hard, and Eileen would require all her courage to support the part she proposed to play. Never had her heart been so heavy or the future seemed so dreary. But the end was not yet.

Wynne, on the other hand, was buoyantly happy. True, he could have wished that Benita had been a little less girlish and had taken their betrothal a little more seriously. But these were mere spots on the sun, faults of youth that time would cure. His lucky star was in the ascendant; he built castles in the air, imagining a future all rose-coloured, as young men will, yet forgetting, as young men do, that none can see a second ahead or take to-morrow out of the hands of the gods.

CHAPTER SIX.

Too Late!

FROM the 'vantage ground of her bedroom window, Mrs. Daryl had seen Paddy pawing the gravel, and wondered why Dr. Wynne had come so soon after his mid-weekly visit (which, she assumed, had been made), as Mrs. Raven, who seemed very well at luncheon, was not likely to have sent for him and had not said she expected him. Moreover, he stayed a long time, and came out accompanied by Benita, and, instead of mounting his horse and riding away, put his arm through the reins and walked with the young lady down the avenue, earnestly talking.

Was this the beginning of a flirtation? It could be no more, of course. Nevertheless, the incident suggested a disquieting possibility, for Mrs. Daryl knew how disappointed her son would be if he were forestalled, and she had made up her mind that the only way of retrieving the family fortunes was to marry him to Benita and Eileen to Tilter.

"Flirtation or not, it must be stopped," she said to herself, and wrote straightway to Guy (who was at Stafford), mentioning what she had seen, and hinting that it would be well for him to come home the next day, even though he had to return on Sunday night. On this advice, Guy acted with characteristic promptitude, reaching the rectory in time for dinner, and in an evil humour, of which, however, he took care there should be no evidence in his manner or looks.

He blamed his mother for not warning him sooner, and himself for the over-confidence which had given Wynne an advantage that might imperil the game.

But Benita's manner reassured him.

"This is an unexpected pleasure. I had no idea you were coming this week-end," she exclaimed when they met at dinner.

And she looked pleased. Never had Guy found her so bright, animated, and appreciative. She missed none of his points, and laughed at his jokes, sometimes when they were obvious to nobody else, in a way that was both flattering and infectious. Afterwards, in the drawing-room, he congratulated her on her high spirits.

"My spirits generally are good, but just now——" she said with a happy smile. "You don't know why; I don't think anybody does."

Guy thought he did, and regretted they were not *en tête-à-tête*.

"Won't you tell me?" he asked, lowering his voice.

"Not now. To-morrow, perhaps," replied Benita with a laugh as though she had said something amusing.

Guy, though he echoed the laugh, did not see the joke. He could not know by intuition that Benita was so hilarious because of her engagement to Dr. Wynne, and that she was enjoying in anticipation the surprise which its announcement would occasion.

The conversation was interrupted by Mr. Daryl inviting his son to a game of chess, and Mrs. Daryl asking Miss Raven to join in a rubber.

It was a short evening. The rector always went early to bed on a Saturday night. Mrs. Raven never sat up late, and at half-past ten Mrs. Daryl and her son found themselves alone.

"I hope, dear, you are not vexed I wrote, but I was really apprehensive that something might be going on adverse to your interest," she began.

"You did quite right, and, though I was rather annoyed at having to come, I am glad I did come," quoth Guy.

"You have good reason to be. Benita was evidently delighted to see you, and you got on famously."

"So you think your apprehensions were groundless?"

"Now, I do; but, if you had seen how friendly she and the doctor seemed when they went down the avenue, you would have been——"

"Suspicious, no doubt, though, when you come to think about it, there was nothing very remarkable in her walking a few hundred yards with the family doctor. All the same, delays are dangerous, and I think I may safely——"

"I am sure you may. I never saw her so gay or look so happy, and it could only be because of your arrival."

There's a plum-pudding on the outside of the January ROYAL MAGAZINE, and plums for everyone inside it.

"She was more than gay, she was gracious, and, if we had been alone——" Guy smiled complacently.

"You must find an opportunity to-morrow. As you say, delays are dangerous, and Dr. Wynne comes once, sometimes twice, a week."

"Still harping on Wynne. By the bye, I have heard something of his history. He is of humble origin, as I suspected."

"That is a circumstance of which he makes no secret. Who is your informant?"

"A solicitor of the name of Bond, whom I met casually at Stafford. Hearing that my home was in the neighbourhood of Ryefield, he inquired whether I knew Alfred Wynne. I said 'yes,' naturally, and Bond told me all about him. His father kept a cake and bun shop at Whitebrook, and when he died, leaving his widow in straitened circumstances, she continued the business, and added to it the manufacture of ginger-beer, and, subsequently, of mineral waters. There were two children—a daughter and a son—and she did so well that she was able to send the one to a boarding-school, the other to college and make a doctor of him. Then she died, leaving them a nice fortune, several thousand pounds apiece. The daughter was already married—to a local manufacturer, I think Bond said—and, instead of putting her money into settlement, she was so ill-advised as to put it into her husband's business, who shortly afterwards went bankrupt. On which what must Wynne do but settle with his brother-in-law's creditors and give his sister enough money to enable them to make a fresh start in one of the Colonies?"

"That was very noble of Dr. Wynne."

"Oh, I grant the nobility. But a man's first duty is to himself, and paying other people's debts to your own impoverishment is not the way to get on. Wynne's nobility has spoilt his career. If he had kept his money, he might have remained in London, and, his qualifications being high, set up as a specialist, or bought a lucrative practice, whereas he had only just enough left to set up as an ordinary practitioner at Ryefield. Hearing, through an agent, of Dr. Trotter's death, he just took the old man's house and stepped into his shoes, and is perhaps making—after deducting horse-keep, etceteras, and bad debts—two or three hundred a year. Ten years hence it may be twice as much, and that is about the best he has any right to expect. Yet he might have been in London, with the ball of fortune at his feet.

"An any rate, he has the satisfaction of knowing that he acted magnanimously," put in Mrs. Daryl, whose affection for her son did not quite include the occasional cynicism of his sentiments.

"Don't you believe it, mother. Wynne is just as likely to rue his foolish generosity as to rejoice in what you call his magnanimity. I have not the least doubt that he either acted on mere impulse or yielded to his sister's solicitations and tears. I thought from the first he was soft, and softness is incompatible with success. Men who would rise high are bound to be hard, except great poets and dreamers, who are born, not made. Cromwell and Napoleon were as hard as adamant, even to cruelty. So are lesser men who succeed.

"Take the present Lord Chief Justice, for instance. Look at his face, the pale, tightly-drawn skin, broad forehead, square jaws, thin, straight lips, piercing, relentless eyes—the face of a man who has risen by sheer force of will. He owes everything to himself, nothing to favour or fortune. His origin was of the humblest, but he worked like a demon, rode rough-shod over all who came in his way, made twenty thousand a year as leading K.C., and is now, at little over fifty, Lord Chief Justice of England and a peer of the realm. No softness about him."

"You here, Eileen? I thought you had gone to bed," exclaimed Mrs. Daryl in surprise.

"I went upstairs with that intention, but, finding I had forgotten my book, came down for it."

"What book?"

"The 'Imitation.' I like to read a little of it every day," replied Eileen, and with that took the book from the table and left her mother and brother to themselves.

"I hope you will be Lord Chief Justice some day, though I shall not live to see it," said Mrs. Daryl. "But I don't like to hear you talk about being as hard as adamant and riding rough-shod over people, and I cannot think you mean it."

Guy smiled assent. He saw that he had committed the fault of being too frank. "Of course not, I was only speaking academically," he said. "I would much rather be gentle than hard, and, as I have a far better start than Lord Lothbury had, I need only try to emulate his better qualities—his industry, perseverance, and—integrity."

"I am glad to hear you say so, dear. I felt sure you were not serious. You would find Benita's income a great help."

"Immense. It would put me almost at once in a position which I could only reach by ten years of strenuous effort. I should offer myself for the Ryefield division at the next vacancy."

"And you would get in, and Benita is a sweet girl and would make you a charming wife."

"You are quite right, and I can truly say I love her for herself—otherwise even her fortune——"

"Would not induce you to marry her. Of course not. However, I hope you will have both her and her fortune, or, at any rate, the use of it, which comes to just the same thing."

"Well, I don't like counting chickens before they are hatched, but we shall see what to-morrow brings forth," returned Guy with smiling confidence, and then he kissed his mother and they separated for the night.

Guy was a good son, in the sense that he honoured his parents because they had the honour of being his parents. They were probably the only individuals in the world whom he really respected, and the retrieval of the family fortunes was hardly less near to his heart than the advancement of his own. His mother possessed more of his confidence than his father, yet though both knew that their son aspired to make a figure in the world, neither of them suspected that he meant to act on the principle that who wills the end wills the means.

The morrow brought forth a great deal. All the rectory people, including Mrs. Raven and her daughter, went to church, and, of course, occupied the rectory pew, where they were presently joined by Tilter, who took a place opposite to Eileen.

"We shall be glad if you will dine with us, Mr. Tilter," said Mrs. Daryl when they shook hands at the church door. "Only I must tell you that we dine early and very simply. My husband likes to make Sunday an easy day for the servants, and give each of them an opportunity for attending at least one service."

Tilter said he should be delighted, and protested that there was nothing he liked so much as dining early and simply on the first day of the week. So he accompanied his friends to the rectory, and had the felicity of walking most of the way with Eileen, a piece of good fortune which he owed quite as much to Mrs. Daryl's adroitness as to his own management. Before dinner was over, he discovered another preference, of which he had previously been unaware.

"Do you enjoy sacred classical music, Mr. Tilter?" his hostess asked him.

"Awfully," answered Tilter, which was so far from being true that he had absolutely no ear for music, either sacred or profane, but it had been both impolitic and impolite to say no when the lady evidently expected him to say yes.

"I felt sure you did," she said with a gratified smile. "Eileen shall play some of Bach's Passion music for you. You will, won't you, dear?"

Eileen flushed, and, seeing no way of escape, bowed a cold assent.

After dinner the party adjourned to the drawing-room—except the rector, who betook himself to his study, and Mrs. Raven, who could not dispense with her siesta.

Eileen went to the piano and arranged her music, Tilter standing by to turn over the leaves for her. As soon as the playing began, Mrs. Daryl, making a muttered excuse, stole away, then Guy, on which Benita, thinking she might be *de trop*, followed suit, and, going to her own sitting-room, took up a book, but, instead of reading it, leant back in her chair and thought about Wynne.

The Ravens occupied the "old end" of the house, which dated from Tudor times and overlooked a terraced garden with a verdant lawn, flower beds, and shrubs cut into fantastic shapes. The room where Benita sat was long and low, the walls were oak panelled, and so thick that each of the windows formed a deep recess, which she had lined with choice plants and sweet-smelling flowers. On the hearth lay a jaguar skin from Mexico. Benita had a great liking for bright colours, they suited her rather gipsy-like appearance, and she affected them in her costume. Her dress was light blue, a curious Indian wrought belt with a silver clasp incircled her waist, her arms were adorned with gold bracelets, at her breast was a carnation, and from a coral necklace hung a gold locket containing a miniature of her father. As was natural, Benita's mind ran on her lover, and she wondered when he would appear. He had promised to come as soon as he had seen the few patients (those tiresome patients!) whom it was necessary to see even on a Sunday, and a rather serious case which he had in hand would allow him.

"At any rate, he will be here before tea-time. I wish he would come while mother is asleep," she mused.

A knock at the door.

"Come in!" she said, thinking it was one of the servants. The door opened, and in came Guy Daryl with a deprecatory air and his most affable smile.

"I hope I don't intrude, as Paul Pry would have said, though I have not come to pry," he began.

"Who is Paul Pry?" asked Benita.

"A character in a play who is always poking his nose into other people's business."

"I never heard of him before. Won't you sit down?"

Guy stepped over the jaguar skin, took the chair nearest to hers and drew it nearer. Benita tried to look amiable, though she did not feel happy. The possibility of Dr. Wynne finding her *en tête-à-tête* with Mr. Guy Daryl was rather disquieting.

"Shall I call my mother?" she asked.

"Please don't. I have an immense admiration for your mother, but there is a time for everything, and this time my business is with you."

Benita looked interested and interrogative, and Daryl, fearing that Mrs. Raven might come without being called, decided to go straight to the point.

"You are surprised and may deem me abrupt," he went on, "but I am here so seldom that I must make the most of my opportunities, and necessity has no law. If you only knew the state of mind I have been in for weeks—since we first met, indeed—you would both pardon and pity me. I can bear the suspense no longer. I must know my fate. Can you love me, Benita? May I hope you will make me the happiest of men by consenting——"

"Impossible. I am engaged already," interrupted Benita with an amused smile. She thought it rather good fun to have two proposals in two days.

"Engaged already!" gasped Guy. "To whom?"

"Dr. Wynne."

"May Dr. Wynne——"

With a great effort Guy bridled his tongue, and the curse, though thought, remained unspoken, but a look swept over his face which, had not Benita just then drooped her eyelids, would have frightened her. "I beg your pardon, but should I be presuming too much if I asked how long?" he added, pulling himself together.

"Since Friday."

"Only since Friday! Had I known, I should not, of course, have presumed—and again I ask your pardon. It is the fortune of war, I suppose, but to me a great grief and disappointment and the ruin of my life's happiness. All the same, I sincerely wish you well, and I know nothing but good of Wynne. He fully deserves his good fortune, though I could wish it had been mine. Do you desire your engagement to be kept secret?"

"Oh, dear, no! We were going to tell you all to-day or to-morrow."

"Your mother knows, then?"

"Yes, and she is very glad. Alfred understands her constitution, and now she will have him always at command, you know," laughed Benita.

Daryl, who was very pale, did not respond even with a smile.

"Good-bye!" he said. "I must start for London to-night, *en route* for Stafford, and may not see you again. You will oblige me by keeping what has passed between us to yourself, Miss Raven?"

"Certainly, if you wish it."

"Thank you," returned Guy sadly, and, after touching her hand with his lips, left the room.

He had behaved like a gentleman, and Benita was so touched by his distress as almost to regret having had to send him hopeless away. But this mood was only momentary. "One cannot be engaged to two men at the same time," she reflected, and her heart as yet was true to Wynne.

It so chanced that while Guy Daryl was proposing to Benita in her mother's drawing-room, Tilter was proposing to Eileen in her mother's sitting-room, where, thanks to that lady's adroit management, they had been left by themselves. Tilter, rising to the occasion, decided to try his luck again—so soon as he could muster up sufficient courage. Meanwhile, he fidgeted in his chair, played with his watch-chain, and pulled his moustache with nervous fingers, making only an occasional irrelevant or incoherent remark.

Her suitor's hesitation afforded Eileen time for collecting her thoughts, and decide how she should answer the declaration which was evidently impending. To accept a man whom she did not love was repugnant to her feelings and contrary to her principles, but none of us are consistent, and her brain was in such a turmoil that she was ready to do almost anything that promised to divert her thoughts into other and less painful channels. Desperate diseases demand desperate remedies, and Eileen for the moment was mentally in desperate straits and terribly afraid of her secret being detected. Her glass told her that her face was suggestive of anything but a tranquil mind. To look cheerful when you feel miserable is a hard task. Her mother, observing her pallor, insisted on her taking a tonic. Her father wanted her to consult Dr. Wynne! At any moment they, or more probably Benita, who had remarked how ill she was looking, might guess the truth.

This would never do, and if Eileen became engaged to Tilter, nobody would suspect that she cared, or ever had cared, for Wynne. And she was beginning to think better of Tilter. He was an honest gentleman, and, though no genius, far from a fool. Brave he was, too. In an evening paper brought by her brother, she read that on the day but one before a wretched woman who had thrown herself from the Thames Embankment was saved from drowning by a bystander, who plunged into the river, "though the tide was running strong," and kept the would-be suicide's head above water until a boat came to the rescue.

The bystander was Mr. Meredith Tilter, of the Nimrod Club and Warcock Hall.

At any rate, Tilter deserved to be loved, and it was possible that she might come to love him. There were also considerations of a more material sort that influenced her in his favour. Though unselfish, Eileen was not so unworldly as to despise wealth and position, and, as the mistress of Warcock Hall, she would have both, as well as a fuller life and more opportunities of helping others, than if she passed the rest of her life in single blessedness, as only that morning she had resolved to do.

Tilter drew his chair nearer to hers.

"May I speak to you, Miss Daryl?" he asked hesitatingly.

"If you please," she answered.

"You know what I am going to say—what I said before, that I love you with all my heart, and I want you to consent to be my wife. I am not literary. I cannot quote poetry and make flowery speeches, yet I can perhaps do something to prove the depth and strength of my love. My mother and some others think I hunt too much, and I am afraid it is a true bill. Well, you have only to say the word, and I will give it up altogether."

"What, never hunt again?"

"Never again, if it so please you."

Eileen was both amused and amazed, also pleased. Devotion could not go further. No woman would be other than gratified with so great a compliment, or treat with disdain so ardent a lover.

"I should not ask you to do that," she said kindly.

"You agree, then? You consent?" interrupted Tilter joyously.

Eileen shook her head.

"It would be doing you a wrong. You deserve to be loved, and I don't love you as a woman ought to love a man whom she engages to marry, probably I never shall. Love neither comes nor goes at the word of command."

"But you don't dislike me?"

"On the contrary, I both like and esteem you, and I must tell you how gratified I was to hear of your rescue of that poor woman. It was a brave deed well done."

"How did you hear of it?"

"I saw an account of it in an evening paper."

"Do the others know?"

"I think not. It was merely a short paragraph at the bottom of a column, which I saw only by chance."

"Well, don't tell them, please. It was only a sudden impulse."

"A noble impulse, though."

"Possibly. All the same, I almost wished afterwards that I had not yielded to it."

"But why? You saved the poor creature's life."

"She was drunk," said Tilter, with a look of disgust. "The police thought she did not really intend to commit suicide. If she had done so, she would have chosen a less public place."

"She counted on being rescued, then? Oh, what strange people there are in the world!"

"There's no doubt of that, but won't you give me an answer?" quoth Tilter, returning to the attack.

"I thought I had given you an answer."

"Only that you don't love me quite as much as a woman ought to love the man whom she engages to marry. But you admit that you like and esteem me. Say yes, and I will risk the rest. Once we are engaged, it will be my fault if I don't make you love me, as I love you. Say yes, Eileen, and put me out of my misery."

"You are risking a great deal. However, if you will have it so," smiling and giving him her hand.

"God bless you, Eileen! You have made me a happy

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man, happier than you know," exclaimed Tilter, and, putting his arm round her waist, he touched her lips with his.

In this way Eileen Daryl and Meredith Tilter became engaged. Tilter, as he had said, esteemed himself a happy man, and his face beamed with joy. Eileen had her thoughts, one of which was that her lover was thankful for small mercies.

In the meanwhile, Benita's mind, as she sat alone in her drawing-room, was running on her lover, and on the remarkable fact of having received two proposals in three days, when a question occurred to her.

"Suppose Mr. Guy Daryl goes and tells the others of my engagement? He did not say he would not, and I must be the first to tell Eileen."

So off she ran to the other drawing-room, where she found the daughter of the house.

"I have news for you, dear. I want to tell you before anybody else, if you don't mind," exclaimed Benita, blushing and almost breathless. "I am engaged."

"To Dr. Wynne?" asked Eileen with a faint smile.

"How did you know?"

"I guessed. I doubt whether anybody else did, though. Have you told anybody else?"

"We meant to keep it quiet till to-morrow. But it is no secret, and may as well be known to-day. I wish you were engaged also."

"I am."

"To Mr. Tilter, of course?"

"Yes, to Mr. Tilter."

"Oh, how jolly! I am so awfully glad, and congratulate you with all my heart."

"And I you," on which they fell to kissing each other, and Eileen tried to look as happy as she ought to have felt.

"Is Mr. Tilter gone?" inquired Benita.

"He is in the study with father, and will stay for tea, and we want you and your mother to join us," replied Eileen.

"May I bring Dr. Wynne? He will be here by that time, perhaps before."

"By all means. We are always glad to see Dr. Wynne."

"Yes, he is very nice," said Benita carelessly, and then returned to her own quarters, but, feeling restless and excited, resolved to meet her lover, though he had not been able to say exactly when he would start. Yet she knew that he meant to walk across the fields, which, as compared with the highway, shortens the distance between Ryefield and Passingford fully two miles. So she put on her things and set out, and, after half an hour's easy walking, caught sight of him at the very moment he caught sight of her.

"How good of you! This is a pleasure," he exclaimed delightedly when they met. "I should have come ever so much sooner, but for that case I told you about. Anything new? You have not told them, I suppose?"

Benita told Wynne of Guy's proposal, and how nice he had been, and how sorry he seemed, adding that nobody could have behaved better.

"Better than I should have done if he had bowled me out," said Alfred. "He did not appear to bear any grudge?"

"On the contrary. He spoke very nicely, and said he knew nothing but good of you."

"I am infinitely obliged to him, and shall let him see——"

"For goodness' sake don't. I promised not to tell, only I forgot," cried Benita in alarm.

"Never fear, I won't betray you; but if I can ever render him a service——"

"You have rendered him a service already. Didn't you save his life?"

"No, I merely helped Nature to prolong it, and that was professional and in the line of duty. I mean some personal service; and an opportunity may occur, though it is perhaps not likely. Shall we go to evening service?"

"You would like to go?"

"I have a feeling that it would be good for us to go together on this, the first Sunday after our engagement, and I am so thankful for the great happiness that has come to me and the brightness of my future that——"

"I understand, dear," interrupted Benita tenderly. "Let us go, by all means. Evensong at Passingford is very nice, and the rector is sure to give us a good sermon."

They walked so slowly and made so many halts as to be only just in time for tea.

On entering the dining-room, they were greeted with a chorus of congratulations, of which none was more seemingly sincere than Guy's.

"You are a lucky fellow, Wynne, and I wish you and Miss Raven every happiness," he said heartily.

"Thank you. Yes, I am lucky beyond my deserts, and your kindness will never be forgotten, either by Benita or myself," returned the doctor with emotion as he pressed Daryl's hand.

Mrs. Daryl put the best face on the matter she could, and offered Wynne and Benita insincere felicitations.

Tea over, Guy took his leave, and was driven to the station. A tip to the guard secured him an hour's solitude, and he was able to give full rein to the consuming ire which he had dissimulated, out of policy, by sheer force of will. He would rather have seen Wynne hanged than congratulated him. Guy had not thought it possible that he could be so far out in his reckoning, so completely fooled. Foiled, too, by a man whom he despised and deemed his inferior, as well in intellect as in energy. He was humiliated and enraged, crossed in his love, touched in his pride, thwarted in his ambition. Without Miss Raven's money, he would have to achieve by years of hard labour the position he had hoped to win almost at a bound. The thought had been madness if he had renounced the hope. Yet, albeit he had received a fall, he refused to accept defeat. Though Benita had rejected him, he was still in the mind to make her his wife, and had masked his feelings solely to gain his ends.

"The fool fancies I am his friend," he reflected. "So much the better. He will be off his guard, and I shall have time to think out a plan for getting rid of him."

This did not mean murder, since, though Guy Daryl, like his ideal hero, Napoleon, was without morals on principle; he had no intention of doing aught that might entangle him with the law, lose him caste, or detract from his character as a man of honour.

The most obvious plan was to put his rival's nose out of joint by making successful love to Benita, but, as Wynne was always at home and Guy generally away, it was not a promising plan. Moreover, he hated Wynne—mainly because Benita loved him—and the grudge he bore him would not be gratified with anything short of his ruin, a ruin so complete that the doctor could neither marry Benita nor remain in the neighbourhood.

To do this without losing Benita's good opinion or compromising his career was the task which Guy Daryl proposed to himself and resolved to accomplish.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

Doing a Bill.

"I AM not pleased with you, Alfred. You haven't been here since Tuesday, and Mr. Tilter comes to see Eileen nearly every day," said Benita, pouting.

"Tilter has no patients——"

"Those patients again! You are more for them than for me."

"You know better than that. Don't be unreasonable, dear," said Wynne gently. "You are more to me than all the world, but duty is duty. I meant to come yesterday, but, just as I was setting out, a messenger came in hot haste to say there had been a serious accident at Wilson's saw-mill and I must go there at once. Two poor fellows had been badly hurt, and I could not leave them for hours."

"And you saved him?"

"He is still alive, and, I hope, will recover. I did not get home till midnight, and at three o'clock was called up to another case——"

"My poor dear boy, you will kill yourself. No wonder you look weary and your eyes are bloodshot. You must really give it up."

"Give up my profession? If you only knew what it is to me. Besides, how should I live?"

"Oh, I don't want you to give up your profession—haven't we agreed that I am to help you to become a great London doctor? But I do want you not to work so hard. Mother was saying only yesterday that, considering the circumstances, you might have an assistant."

"Well, considering the circumstances, I think I might, and I will," smiling. "Is there anything else I can do to oblige you?"

"You might be a little more frank about your past."

Wynne stared. "More frank about my past! What on earth do you mean, Benita?"

"You never told me what you had done for your sister and your brother-in-law, how generously you helped them—to your own detriment."

"Where did you get hold of that tale?"

"From Eileen. She had it from her mother, and her mother had it from Guy."

"And how did he learn it?"

"I suppose somebody told him. Isn't it true?"

"Well, I am doubtful about the detriment, and the generosity was probably less than you think. Fenton failed, and would have been sold up, dish and spoon, if I had not come to the rescue."

"So you gave them all you had?"

"Very nearly. But a doctor can always make a living—unless he is either a knave or a fool—and as, though my upbringing and education cost my mother fifty times more than Susie's, she left me as much as her, I considered myself in Susie's debt."

"All the same, it was very noble of you. You need not deny it. Everybody thinks so."

"Everybody?" questioned Wynne with an amused smile.

"At any rate, Eileen and my mother, and I do. Also, I have no doubt, Mrs. Daryl and Guy. They must, because it was noble of you," repeated Benita positively.

"I have just been writing to Guy," remarked Wynne, who wanted to change the subject. "He sent me a cheque for his account——"

"Only now! Why, it is ever so long since his accident."

"If I get paid within six months of sending in my bills, I consider myself lucky, especially when my patient assures me that I have laid him under an obligation which money alone can never discharge."

"That was very nice of Guy."

"Very, even though he did not quite mean it."

"Have you any reason to suppose he did not mean it?"

"Well, people exaggerate sometimes, and the letter struck me as being rather effusive. But it may have been an indirect way of assuring me that he bears no malice, and is as much my friend as ever. I can imagine no other motive, though I had not given him credit for so much kindly feeling. However, I always try to think of a man as I find him, and there is no denying that Guy has behaved handsomely all through."

Had Wynne been less unsuspicious, he might have been more dubious as to the sincerity of his quondam rival's assurances of goodwill. But he could not know that Guy had accompanied his cheque with an effusive letter solely to obtain a specimen of Wynne's handwriting for a purpose that boded him no good.

(Another long instalment of this romance next week.)

THE

Daily Express

Is London's Best, Brightest, and Most Readable Halfpenny Morning Paper.

It is always Brimful of News.

Of all Newsagents and Bookstalls throughout the Country.

STRIKES OF THE UNEMPLOYED.

Curious Conflicts without Bloodshed.

A DUEL of a most determined character has taken place at Cobham, in Surrey, between a hotel proprietor and the owner of the ground close at hand.

The hotel proprietor erected in the garden facing the railway a placard advertising his hotel. This was the cause of all the bother, for the owner of the ground between the garden and the railway strongly objected and he erected a hoarding so as to screen the placard from view.

The proprietor then had the placard raised so as to show above the hoarding, but he was quite as promptly met by a superstructure being added to the screen. Determined not to be beaten again, he raised the placard. This time he nailed to it a flag in order to make it more conspicuous.

His opponent, equally determined, heightened the covering boards. At this stage the elements entered into the conflict, and the hoarding was blown down three times, leaving the advertisement in full view. The owner of the ground, not to be outdone, had a very elaborate structure erected.

The hotel proprietor no longer attempts to display his advertisement above the hoarding. He has placed the placard on the ground in such a manner that it shows below the boarding of the screen.

The clergymen of Jackson, Michigan, U.S.A., have decided to refuse to attend interments where the conditions that they lay down are not strictly complied with. The chief conditions are: A consultation with the minister before fixing the hour for the funeral; no funerals on Sunday; a closed carriage for the clergyman on wet days; and compensation for funeral sermons for non-church goers.

An original and extraordinary strike is a strike of school children. The strikers attend the elementary school at Crezières, near Poitiers. They have refused to attend their classes unless the headmaster is dismissed from his position. The children have the full support of their parents and allege that they have been harshly treated by the master.

A curious spectacle was witnessed in Athens one Saturday recently, when a procession of fifty nurses marched to the Government Buildings. These nurses were from the Home for Lost Children and they went to complain of a formidable grievance.

For some time the nurses had not received any salary. They were received by the President of the Council. The fifty striking nurses were completely successful. The Minister at once made out an order for the payment of the money in arrear.

Equally remarkable was the strike of the unemployed which took place at Blackpool. Hundreds of men in the town were out of work and in order to relieve their distress the Corporation opened out relief works on the Gynn estate.

First of all the men were engaged at so much a yard, the sum working out at about fourpence an hour. However, such a great number of unemployed flocked to the place that the average was reduced to threepence halfpenny an hour. Forthwith 260 of the excavators struck work.

The Trade Unions of the United States are very exclusive, which accounts for the following incidents which recently happened there.

A lady who was refitting her house, wished to have two eighteenth century mantelpieces put in; this was reported to the walking delegate of the men, who inquired if the articles were union made. Of course, as there were no unions in New York before 1800 it was quite evident that they were not.

The lady insisted in having her own way. This was why the work was promptly stopped and the house was left without the front stairs and other necessaries. As a result to stand by her foreign fireplace she has had to live in an incomplete building for over three months.

A similar case to the foregoing arose in Chicago, and naturally caused considerable amusement in fashionable circles. Mrs. Chatfield-Taylor, who is a well-known Chicago society leader, is an amateur bookbinder. She has bound in art covers a good many volumes written by her friends.

The Bookbinders' Union accordingly threatens the publishers for whom the books are bound with a general strike. This strike will affect every publisher's office in Chicago, and will be persisted in unless Mrs. Chatfield-Taylor joins the Bookbinders' Union.

Another case is that where Senator Hanna was asked to lay the corner stone of a Salvation Army building. Straight away he received an ultimatum from the Bricklayers' Union of Cleveland notifying him that it was impossible for him to perform this ceremony without joining their union. The reason given for this action was that during the ceremony he would handle a trowel for a moment.

A fasting man has gone on strike. He was supposed to have eaten nothing for a fortnight and was lying in a glass coffin in a show in the Boulevard de Clichy.

It happened that one of the spectators began to chaff him, and expressed doubts as to the genuine character of the fast. He made all sorts of facetious remarks to the fasting man, asked him what he had to eat the previous day, and how he liked his food cooked.

At last the "exhibit" was so incensed that he threw off the lid of the coffin, jumped out, and gave his tormentor a very good thrashing in spite of all struggles. Then it was that the spectators took the doubter's side and thrashed the fasting man until the police stopped them.

The Editor of the ROYAL MAGAZINE wishes all "P. W." readers a happy Xmas, and hopes they will read his January number.

Clothes Made from Bananas.

And other Products Obtained from Christmas Fruits.

The Grape, of Course, is Noted for its Wine.

While Excellent Coffee is made from Date Stones.

The Christmas fruits were conversing as to which of them served the greatest number of useful purposes.

"Say what you like," began the orange, "but it wouldn't be good old Christmas without plenty of my golden balls to add picturesqueness to the dessert table and my luscious juice to soothe rebellious Little Marys. Imagine Christmas puddings without my candied peel, marmalade, without my Sevilles, eau de Cologne without my——"

"Go easy," cried the lemon sourly. "I provide all those, and more."

"You provide perfume?" queried the orange.

"Rather," replied the lemon. "The fragrant oil pressed from my blossoms is thus used; but the essence pressed from my peel is the chief ingredient of aerated lemonade, than which, to my thinking, there's no better drink."

"If you're talking of refreshment," remarked the orange, "what price my wine or Curaçoa, in which fruit as small as peas are used? Anyway, none of you provide brides with head-dresses."

"Lemonade and orange wine!" sneered the apple. "Bah! I wonder people drink such stuff when I

provide such excellent cider."

Immediately there followed a heated discussion on wines and liqueurs, in which the date, pear, fig, walnut, pineapple, lime, and banana each championed its own particular decoction.

"How you fellows do talk!" said the grape, sarcastically. "You don't really know the taste of wine; that is, unless you've drunk champagne, port, sherry, claret, Madeira, Moselle, or Burgundy. I produce the lot."

"And little else," put in the filbert. "Now, I don't make people intoxicated; I cure their toothaches, and find them water, minerals, and treasure."

"Go on, now!" sneered the chestnut. "Might I ask how, Professor Hazel?"

"With my divining-rod, of course. Any other wood is absolutely useless. Then my young, straight stems and branches are used for making crates, baskets, and similar articles. My roots, too, provide an excellent veneer, while any painter will tell you that my oil has splendid drying properties. And if that doesn't make your juices sour with envy, know also that I provide a charcoal used largely for forges,

artists' crayon, and gunpowder."

"Did anyone say gunpowder?" growled the lime. "If so, why? Because my charcoal is preferred to all others by explosive makers. Try it for cleaning your teeth, it's capital. Then if you want mats, ropes, or other plaited work, my fibrous inner bark will supply you. But it's my medicinal properties I'm specially proud of. I'm absolutely A1 for scurvy, dysentery, and for healing wounds and sores."

"Medicine!" cried the orange, "don't forget I'm real good for 'flu' and fevers."

"And I'm O.K. for gumboils," ejaculated that seedy individual the fig, "not to mention pulmonary complaints and disorders of the Little Mary."

The pomegranate declared that its astringent juice was a splendid gargle for sore throat, the walnut that its leaves provided an infusion superb for scrofula, and the lemon, melon, apple, and grape each boasted of its powers for other curative purposes.

"Anyone been fishing lately?" suddenly asked the fig.

"I've been shooting," replied the walnut, "or rather my gun-stocks have."

"I was going to remark," continued the fig, "that perhaps the nets were made of cordage obtained from my bark. In India, you know,

my leaves are used

for polishing wood and ivory, but in the Malayan Islands I'm really a dangerous person. The natives there use my juice to poison arrow-heads. In Tahiti they dye cloth with it."

"And so they do with my roots and husks," said the walnut.

"But they don't roast and grind you for coffee, now, do they?" gurgled the fig.

"Not so fast, young 'un," exclaimed the date; "the coffee made from my roasted stones is as good as yours. And I've got another pull on you. I'm the staple food of Egypt, Persia, and Arabia. Everyone knows that my yield is twelve times that of corn."

"Don't forget I'm here," remarked the banana. "I'm as good as a steak any day. Four thousand pounds of me grow on less space than thirty-five pounds of wheat."

"Ever tried my bread?" inquired the chestnut. "In southern Europe the peasantry practically subsist on it."

"That's true," agreed the walnut. "They ring the changes on the chestnut and me. But then I'm a popular ketchup and pickle in Britain. The residue left after expression of my famous oil comes in handy for feeding cattle."

"I'm used for a similar purpose," said the date. "In addition, my leaf stalks are fashioned into fans, walking-sticks, baskets, and wicker-work. The leaves themselves are made into bags, mats, and such like."

"Not Morocco bags, surely?" queried the pomegranate, "because then I shall have been used in the tanning—an accomplishment I believe unique in a fruit."

"Some of my old trees," said the walnut, "are worth £600 apiece. They provide the timber for the very best furniture; suites, cabinets, pianos—goodness only knows how many costly articles I'm used for."

"Usefulness is my motto," remarked the chestnut; "that's why builders use my hard and durable timber in erecting houses. My furniture, too, has to stand knocking about."

"The tree that produces me," said the prune, "is excellent for turnery and carving, while thousands of banjos and fiddles are made from my wood."

The lime, hazel, date, and almond stated that the timber of each was used for furniture,

building, and other purposes.

"I'll give you a Christmas riddle," here cried the banana. "If a mariner was wrecked on an absolutely desert island, without house, food, and clothing, what fruit would supply the lot?"

"Give it up," they cried, after cogitation.

"The banana, of course," was the reply. "In the first place, the house could be built of my timber, the roof and other parts of my leaves, the small pieces of which provide spoons, plates, and bottles. My fibre makes excellent cordage, and thus provides mats, cloth, and also paper. As for food, one pound of me is equal to three pounds of beef, but I am also ground into flour; besides which I make vinegar, jam, beer, champagne, and brandy.

"For clothing the mariner could choose between a costume of leaves such as Uganda women wear, or he could weave a suit of Manilla hemp, made from my fibre, of a texture so extremely fine that several yards can be inclosed in the hand. In Uganda, too, I refine sugar, and make umbrellas and babies' cradles. Had enough? Well, ta, ta! Compliments of the season!"

Hewitt: "Gruet has an eye to business."

Jewett: "Yes; one eye to his own and two to other people's."

Mrs. Bixby: "If woman goes into politics, what do you suppose the leading issue will be?"

Bixby: "The money question."

"You're a nice little boy, Tommy," said Mr. Newman.

"That's what they all say when they first meet sister," Tommy remarked.

Doctor: "Well, what do you want?"

Washerwoman: "A Christmas-box."

Doctor: "What for?"

Washerwoman: "My children have given the whole village measles."

PRIZES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

Uncle Toby Offers Gramophones, Penknives, Books, and other prizes.

January 26th, 1904, is the last day on which attempts in this competition can be received.

On the cover of this number you will see the heading "Pearson's Weekly, To Interest, To Elevate, To Amuse," which appears week by week.

What you have to do is to **copy this heading in black ink.** The copies must be larger than the original heading, and the work must be done in school hours at the request of the master or mistress of your class. No ruling is allowed.

When the headings are done the teacher should collect them and send them along in an envelope marked "Boy" or "Girl," as the case may be, to Uncle Toby, "Pearson's Weekly," Henrietta Street, London, W.C., together with a few lines certifying that the heading is in each case the unaided work of the competitor. Each heading must bear the name and school address of the pupil who drew it. As the attempts of each school are finished they should be sent in at once. Schools may make any number of attempts. No attempt will be eligible for a prize unless accompanied by a teacher's certificate of its being unaided work.

To the pupil in each school competing who sends in the most accurate drawing, a little gift in the shape of either a pencil-case, penknife, book, box of water-colours, card of school requisites, or novelty top will be immediately awarded, and to each of the five boys and five girls whose attempts Uncle Toby considers to be the best of all those sent in from all schools will be presented a splendid Gramophone, together with two records. Moreover, the teacher of each pupil who receives a Gramophone will be presented with a cheque for £2 2s.

Show this to your school-teacher, and ask him or her to allow you and your schoolmates to enter for this competition.

The number of copies of *Pearson's Weekly* required by the teacher for the purpose of copying will be sent post free on receipt of a postcard addressed to the Publisher, *Pearson's Weekly*, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

CHILDREN WHO KEEP SHOPS.

Successful Businesses that are Run by "Nippers."

"That stall ain't mine; it belongs to 'im." The speaker was a costermonger, sued in connection with an accident at the stall, and "'im" was a boy whose head did not reach the top of the witness-box at the Whitechapel County Court.

"Belongs to him—a child like that!" exclaimed the judge.

The father declared that it was so—that the boy, who did not look to be more than nine years old, "allus goes to Spitalfields Market and buys 'is hown stuff. When I was a nipper," he asseverated, "I did the same thing."

The judge would not accept the plea, and the father had to pay. But the case has brought into prominence the fact that there is a very large number of mere babies in our large towns not only earning their livings, but actually running little businesses of their own.

Of these the most curious instances are to be found in and around Smithfield. Charged at the Guildhall with wandering, an eight-year-old boy indignantly repudiated the charge. He was a fat collector, he told the magistrate, and earned enough to both feed and clothe himself.

The fat collectors get their innings at twelve o'clock, when the Meat Market closes. When it finishes the salesmen sweep out their stalls. A large portion of these sweepings consist of trimmings of fat. A horde of rough and ragged youngsters are in waiting, and in a few moments the ground is swept quite clear.

Each then hurries off to the rag and bone shops near Cloth Fair, where the fat fetches a halfpenny a pound. Others of the children collect bits of meat, and others, again, wooden skewers. They make on an average from one to three shillings a day.

On Saturday night the market is full of child costermongers from seven to fourteen years of age. These peddle onions and herbs to cook with the Sunday joint.

The census statistics that have regard to child workers make extraordinary reading, and an odd fact is that girls of tender years seem to take to business more seriously than boys of the same age. No fewer than 142 little girls of ten or less are returned as charwomen, 681 earn their living in the tobacco trade, 450 in jewellery and watch-making, and over 30,000 in the textile industries as factory hands.

One girl of the same tender age is returned as an insurance clerk, three are said to be *bargemen*. One is a "painter and engraver," another a "missionary and itinerant preacher." Forty are coal miners, fifty-two cycle or motor makers, and twenty-four pawnbrokers!

Of boys of similar elementary age we find five engaged in scientific pursuits, four are authors, editors, or journalists. There are also thirty-four actors.

London has a small boy who earns his living as a flagstone artist. His inscription explains his having been forced into this vocation. "I am the eldest of six brothers, and our father has died and left us totally unprovided for, and this is all I can do to help as yet, as I am only ten years old."

Chicago lays claim to the possession of the two youngest editors in the world. Their names are William Keneys and Emily Swing. They are now about fourteen, but they began business three years ago. Their paper is the Penny Post.

They are not only editors, but writers, compositors, pressmen, and circulators. They began by writing out the paper laboriously by hand, but by the time their circulation reached the fifty mark they were forced to abandon this.

They bought a suit of second-hand type and other printers' appurtenances, taught themselves type-setting, and now have got their paper upon a paying basis. They send copies to a dozen different States, to Canada, and even to Japan.

Willie Gwinn, "the boy doctor," is another American prodigy. He is now not quite eight years old, but has passed nearly every examination which the average medical student of three times his age has undergone.

He was only five when he was examined at the Rush Medical College on the osseous and circulatory systems and the minute anatomy of the heart. He passed with flying colours. He makes a considerable addition to the family income by his medical skill.

There is a boy in Delaware, Ohio, who keeps a small shop about eight feet by six, where he sells food for pets, such as squirrels, rabbits, and pigeons. His name is Jack Marvin. He began this business when only eight years old, and is so clever at it that now, at the age of ten, he makes a living for himself and for his widowed mother. A great deal of his stock he collects himself, and he is said to be especially smart in prescribing special food for sick and ailing pets.

But there is one English record of a youth in business which even America would probably find it hard to beat. The stationmaster in charge of Welford Park Station, on the Lambourne Valley Railway in Berkshire, was appointed to his office at the age of thirteen, and is said to have given perfect satisfaction in the discharge of his duties.

"Fortune Telling by Cards," may be had, post free for 1s. 2d. from The Publisher, 17 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Great Men Who Own Little Railways

Miniature Trains that Belong to Celebrities.

One "Toy" Engine Took Thirteen Years to Build.

While the Duke of Westminster Owns the Finest Miniature Railway in England.

THERE are about one hundred model and miniature railways in Great Britain, the finest and best-equipped among them all being that owned by the Duke of Westminster, at Eaton Hall.

The track is four and a half miles long, is splendidly ballasted, and is attended to constantly by a couple of expert platelayers. The gauge is fifteen inches, and the sum expended in construction, exclusive of buildings, was exactly £1,309 per mile.

The one engine (built by Mr. Heywood, of Duffield, who also owns a miniature railway) cost £400. Its average speed is about fifteen miles an hour, though it has done twenty-one upon occasion.

There is one passenger coach, thirty-four goods waggons, besides brake van, tool van, and parcels van, all of which are, of course, built to scale, and elaborately finished.

Next in order to the above, in point of costliness and completeness, comes the Pitmaston Moor Green Model Railway, owned by Sir John Holder.

Its length is comparatively insignificant, but its equipment of rolling-stock probably surpasses that of

any miniature railway in the world.

For instance, it has no fewer than three locomotives, varying in length from 7 ft. 5 in. to 9 ft. over all, and with driving wheels measuring between 9 in. in diameter (four coupled) and 16 in. (single).

The biggest of these engines, which is a Great Northern type, once travelled over four miles with a six-passenger load at express speed without a single stop.

Very remarkable is the miniature railway at Croydon, constructed and owned by Dr. Gerald Hovenden, the well-known specialist, and his brother, Mr. Arthur Hovenden.

In its entirety it constitutes an absolutely correct model to scale of the suburban portion of the London, Brighton, and South-Coast Railway, and embraces the whole of this section of the system between the two termini of London Bridge and Victoria at the one end, and Croydon at the other.

Although only 22 ft. long by between two and three feet broad, all the principal lines are shown, together with the junctions, signals, points, and crossings, as they exist in the real railway. Even the stations are decorated with miniature reproductions of well-known advertisements; while the

engines drawing the trains

are so constructed as to take precisely twenty seconds to traverse the system, as against the twenty minutes—average schedule time—of the full-sized locomotives.

Lieut.-Col. J. Robert Harvey, again, who was Mayor of Norwich in 1903, owns a miniature railway and passenger express train, the latter so perfectly duplicated from a real one that it even has attached to it a travelling post-office van, fitted with collecting nets and delivery apparatus.

The weight of this one car, it may be mentioned, is over 20 lb., so that the size and solidity of the entire train, with its engine and tender attached, may be imagined.

"The most westerly railway in the United Kingdom" is the title applied by its designer and builder, Colonel W. Hamilton, to the miniature line he has constructed in the grounds of his residence, Glenties, co. Donegal, Ireland.

The house is situated on a headland, almost an island, which juts out into the Atlantic ocean. It is a complete and beautifully equipped model railway, with rolling-stock, water tanks, turntables, carriage works, coal stages, tunnels and sidings, and is entirely the work of

its proprietor's own hands.

Mr. Walter Alcock, the well-known musician and assistant organist at Westminster Abbey, is very proud of having built "off his own bat" a complete working model of a Midland engine, which, although only weighing about 60lb., has drawn a man weighing sixteen stone.

All the work incidental to its construction was done during his spare hours, and at the time he was studying for and sitting for his Mus. Bac. degree. Also, he had no prior engineering experience, except what he had gained as a boy, when he built an engine with a cocoa-tin boiler, and his mother's best pair of scissors as his principal tool.

To Dr. J. Bradbury Winter, of Brighton, belongs the credit of having constructed the most perfect, as it certainly is the most wonderful, model locomotive in England.

It is an exact duplicate, down to the minutest detail, of the London, Brighton, and South-Coast Railway's engine "Como," on a scale of one inch to one foot, and it occupied thirteen years in the building.

Every part, down to the last nut and rivet, was made by Dr. Winter himself, and was, wherever possible, chiselled out of the solid metal instead of being cast.

For example, the wheels were first cut as discs from a mass of Bessemer steel. Then the spokes were marked out, holes were drilled round the lines, and the spaces were chiselled out and finished with the file.

This method necessitated the drilling of more than seven hundred holes in each wheel, and the time occupied in completing the six wheels was over a year.

Even the steel covering for the fire-box was cut out of a solid block of metal, although it is barely 1-96th of an inch in thickness.

So much for those who make models their hobbies. Of those who design and prepare these models, perhaps the best known are W. J. Bassett-Lowke and Co., of Northampton, who are responsible for some of the most beautiful models

ever put on the market.

They are very proud of a splendid Midland compound engine, the parts of which may be obtained for a few sovereigns and put together by amateurs. When complete it measures, with tender, nearly a yard in length, and will draw a hundredweight behind it. The boiler is fitted with water-tubes, and supplies of water and methylated spirits are carried in the tender. In appearance it is an exact reproduction of its prototype—M.R. No. 2631.

During the past two or three years a tremendous boom has taken place in model locomotives. The youth of to-day is not content with the gaudy, brass-boilered, big-wheeled toys that satisfied his elder brother when he was a boy; he wants something more nearly approaching the original.

Up to the present the difficulty in the way of a young man of moderate means acquiring such a model was a question of price. To obtain a correct model of one of the famous locomotives on the chief railways five years ago one had to pay anything between £30 and £100. This, of course, made real model locomotives

a hobby only for the wealthy.

Realising these facts, Mr. Lowke decided to produce models which should—in appearance, at all events—be miniature replicas of the most famous express engines on British railways, and to put them on the market at a reasonable figure. To do this, of course, the locomotives had to be turned out in enormous quantities, and the factories from which the "Black Prince," the Great Northern "singles" and the South-Western compound expresses emanate, employ over 2,000 hands.

The first weekly paper to offer these locomotives in open competition is THE BOYS' LEADER, which is offering from time to time model railways. The locomotive alone is two feet long, and is enamelled and lined in the correct colours. Some of the trains are those of the L. and N.W.R., L. and S.W.R., and the Midland. With the locomotive and tender is given a beautiful bogie carriage—a miniature of one of the latest main line cars, with doors that open and shut. These, together with a set of rails, make the most beautiful present for a boy or young man it is possible to imagine. The locomotive is not a toy; it is a beautiful piece of mechanism, and from its manipulation one may learn a great deal about engineering.

FOR ONE OR TWO?

HE fixed a passionate, yearning gaze upon her, and his words came slowly and with painful emphasis.

"I am about to buy a new bicycle," he said, "and I have come to you at this crisis in my life to ask your advice upon a matter that is more to me than life itself."

For the first time since she had become accustomed to riding a bicycle a gentle flush suffused her cheek, for she realised what was coming.

"Speak," she said. And her breath came in abbreviated gusts.

"Would you, or would you not, advise me to get a tandem?" he asked; and it was easy to see that his whole future was bound up in the question.

Her eyes rested upon the ground as she answered softly:

"Get one."

"Darling!" he cried joyously. And for a minute or two their heads were so close together that it was impossible to say which was his and which was hers.

And thus they became engaged.

"ARE your new neighbours all right socially?"

"Oh, yes. They have six motors, ten bulldogs, and one child."

PAPA: "She says our child gave her child the measles."

Mamma: "What a horrid woman! Why, she knows perfectly well that her child came over to our Cecil and took them."

SWINDLERS WHO THRIVE ON XMAS.

Be on your Guard when Buying Christmas Fare.

WHOLESALE drapery merchants do not look with so much favour upon Christmas as do some of us. A month or two before the festive season they begin to get letters from their customers, who are, of course, retail tradesmen, inquiring about the best articles for the decoration of their windows for the holiday season.

There is more in these letters than meets the eye. The underlying meaning is that the special goods of these firms will not be displayed in the shop windows unless the show is paid for.

This system of obligatory Christmas-tipping is a sort of blackmail from which the wholesale trade is by no means the only sufferer.

Large retailers say that they one and all lose by the system of secret bribes administered in the form of Christmas presents to their buyers by the wholesale firms with which they deal.

Certain of these great houses, they assert, obtain a hold upon their buyers by means of Christmas boxes, and then add the cost of these secret payments to the price of the goods they sell.

Almost every householder in the land has his tradesman's bills similarly increased. Servants who are commissioned to do the buying for wealthy masters make a practice of demanding Christmas boxes from those tradesmen with whom they deal.

The shopkeeper who holds out against these demands almost invariably loses the custom of the employer.

It is so easy for the butler to declare that the wine from Messrs. So-and-So is not up to the mark of the last purchase, or for the cook to allege that the butcher is giving Australian mutton in place of Welsh. Or, if the servants do not do this, they create delays in the payment of accounts.

This sort of thing, of course, puts an end to honest trading, and the man with a small income who does his own shopping suffers indirectly by the higher price which his grocer or butcher is practically forced to charge him for his purchases.

The tricks of the Christmas market, too, are endless. The buyer of a joint cut from the champion beast, or more particularly from one of the fat oxen from a Royal farm, must have been struck by the extremely inflated price which he is forced to pay for his purchase. Yet even so, he cannot be by any means certain that he has got what he paid for.

A correspondent wrote to a London daily last Christmas, saying that he had purchased a joint cut from the champion beast at a certain butcher's. Dining with a friend next day, he found that his friend had bought the corresponding joint.

So far, so good; but when they both met a mutual friend the same evening, and he told them with pride that he also had purchased a similar cut, they began to see that either the champion animal must have been a freak of Nature, or else that at least one of the three had been swindled.

It is difficult for the poulterer to estimate exactly what his sale of Christmas turkeys is likely to amount to. He does not like to run short. Consequently he overstocks, and if the weather is warm and muggy some of the birds are sure to become a little dubious. But not unsaleable! Oh, no! The smart man knows a trick worth two of that.

When a turkey begins to become "high" it is at once dipped into a solution of permanganate of potash. This arrests decomposition, but has a tendency to discolour the skin. Therefore the whole bird is carefully dusted with flour to cover up any such discolouration.

The intending purchaser should pinch the breast of the suspected bird. A litle flour on his fingers will be a sure proof that the turkey is not as fresh as it should be.

Christmas fruits, such as raisins, dates, sultanas and the like, are also subject to doctoring by the up-to-date grocer who finds that he has old stock on his hands. He rejuvenates them by a soaking in sugar dissolved in water. This gives them a moist, fresh appearance.

Fruit that has been treated in this way soon dries out again, but on the outside of it remain traces of candied sugar.

Everyone has seen an attendant in a big market or butcher's shop throw the joint selected by a customer to the man who does the trimming and wrapping up, shouting at the same time, "Weigh up here, five and four!" or whatever the price may be. Here is where another fraud is often worked on the unsuspecting customer, and more frequently at Christmas, when business is rushed, than at any other time.

It is the timid customer who suffers. The salesman never tries it upon those likely to find it out. The fraud is simplicity itself. It consists merely in tacking another halfpenny or penny a pound on to the meat in the almost instantaneous addition which the salesman does in his head.

Supposing the joint is eight pounds and the price 7½d a pound, the cost should of course be 5s. The man shouts five-and-four, and by so exacting an extra fourpence makes it work out at 8d. a pound. The salesman counts on the customer being either incapable of doing or too lazy to do the sum himself.

You must read the "Real Life Romances" in the current ROYAL MAGAZINE. They are stranger than fiction

. . . THE . . .

GAMBLE OF LIFE.

By ARTHUR APPLIN.

Author of "Life's Great Handicap," "Dolores," "A Coward's Marriage," "The Shadow of Her Sin," etc.

NAMES TO NOTE.

Molly Indulie, the widow of Richard Indulie.

Brian Maxwell, the man Molly loves and is loved by. He thinks that she killed her husband, and in order to save her confesses that he did the deed. He is imprisoned.

Anne Bramant, the woman whom Indulie promised to marry. She kills him on the day that he weds Molly.

Joan Bramant, her daughter.

Matthew Gregson, Anne's brother.

Paul Bartlett, a school friend of Brian and Indulie. He is in love with Joan.

Joe Thompson, another school friend, whom Indulie has ruined.

John Smith and **"Pete,"** the proprietors of Heppel's World-famed Circus, in which Joan was a performer.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN.

Molly Makes a Move.

MOLLY was beginning to despair; reaction had set up since Paul Bartlett's first visit, when he promised to find the woman who killed Richard Indulie and to force her to take Brian's place in prison.

The knowledge that her lover was innocent and would soon be free had raised her from the slough of despair into which she had been slowly sinking, to the firm, clean highlands of hope. From that lofty position, where so many men have watched the sun of life rise—and set!—she saw the joy and happiness of her girlish dreams returning. With open arms she welcomed them; with a glad, trustful heart she recommenced to build that castle in the air, the foundation stones of which she and her schoolboy chums had laid at Maundon long ago.

So, after all, the Prince would return to claim his little Princess, and his hand would be clean and his heart true! And she—though she bore Indulie's name, he had done no more than scrawl that name across the sealed book of her life.

The story had yet to be written, and Brian Maxwell was returning to write it with her; and one of her pals was bringing him back to her—one of her dear boy-lovers of the dear old Maundon days.

At first she waited with joyful anticipation; then with glad and patient faith. When long days of silence passed and faith slid away, prayers came to her aid, but despair at last settled in her heart, and evicted the last ray of hope. Despair more gaunt and hideous than she had ever known before.

It hurt her that Paul had apparently forgotten or forsaken her. Even though he could not or dared not prove Brian's innocence and so set him free, yet if he possessed the least particle of love or friendship for either of them he would surely have come and explained everything to her. His silence and his absence tortured her beyond endurance. When she went out now it was solely with the hope of meeting Paul or gleaning news of his whereabouts. She sought him in the streets, she hunted the newspapers lest any ill had befallen him, but all in vain.

Until one evening, when she returned home to her flat weary and heartbroken, she found his letter.

It seemed the irony of a malicious Fate that she should have missed seeing him, but even his letter put new life into her veins and hope into her heart again.

"I came to see you to ask your forgiveness," Paul had written, "and to confess how selfishly and cruelly I have behaved towards you. I cannot yet secure Brian's release from prison, or prove his innocence to the world, as I promised to do. For I did not know what I promized. If I move in the matter now I bring ruin and disgrace on a life that is more than anything in the world to me—the woman I love and am going to make my wife. You can guess that she is Anne Bramant's child.

"When we are married and I can give Joan my name and protection, and when Brian's sentence expires—in less than a year now—we will go to him and explain everything and he shall decide what is to be done.

"But, remembering my promise to you, I will, if you wish it, endeavour to secure Brian's freedom immediately I have made Joan my wife. *I cannot do so before.* I think Anne Bramant will agree to anything I ask of her when she finds her daughter is safe and happy; but for her sake, as well as Joan's, I beg you to await Brian's release, for he may be able to prove, not only his innocence, but Anne Bramant's innocence also.

"Dear Molly, forgive me. Love, friendship, and duty have each shown me a different path, and I stand at the cross-ways waiting until love joins her hand in mine and together we can take the path of duty, no matter where it leads.

"Though you may have cause to doubt it, yet I dare sign myself your friend always— "PAUL."

At first Molly felt nothing but joy and gratitude at the contents of the letter, and the knowledge that Paul had not forsaken her was in itself sufficient to make her happy. She sat down to answer his letter immediately, but when she came to put her thoughts into words she found it difficult to express all she felt.

For, as her joy that the wall of silence which had surrounded her so long began to wear down and find its level, thoughts of Brian and desire for Brian and his release stormed her heart.

For four years she had suffered, alone and in silence, believing the man she loved, who had been true to her since childhood, was guilty of murder, the murder of her husband!

But now that she knew he was innocent, and had suffered and taken the burden of sin and shame upon his own shoulders for her sake—he was suffering still, wasting the precious moments of his life in the horrible gloom of a convict prison, she could bear it no longer. If those who could save him would not speak, she herself must speak.

Paul in his letter spoke of a year as if it were nothing, as if it would soon pass!

A year! To leave Brian an hour longer in prison would be a terrible crime, and she the criminal.

These thoughts surged through her heart and set her soul on fire and stirred her to action.

"Brian, my beloved, I will save you," she cried aloud. "I myself will come to you. I will not leave you alone to suffer needlessly another day!"

She ran to the window and pulled back the blind and looked down into the streets. The lamps were already lighted; it was growing dark. The snowstorm that was sweeping Dartmoor stretched her white arms towards the great city, and scattered frozen tears along the damp pavements and greasy streets. A bitter wind whistled round the street corners and moaned mournfully across the squares.

"Brian, dear Brian," Molly cried aloud, "bear up, dear heart, I am coming to you!"

Her overwrought imagination pictured the great prisons standing alone among the great hills; cold, cheerless, silent, swept by the icy wind and the frozen flakes. And hidden in a narrow cell, scantily fed, meanly clothed, Brian, her lover, lying on a cold stone floor paying with the rare, never-to-be-recovered gold of youth, for a crime he did not commit, tortured, too, with the knowledge that he had not even the satisfaction of suffering for his beloved.

Innocent both of them, and free both should have been, yet Fate still kept them apart, still mocked them!

Molly dropped the window blind and crossed to the fireplace and glanced at the clock on the mantelpiece.

It was past eight o'clock, too late to take any action that night. Noting the address at the head of Paul's letter she looked out the trains to Tavistock in the "A B C" and then rang for her maid.

"I am starting at ten o'clock to-morrow morning for Devonshire," she said. "I shall go alone and may not return for several days. I shall not take much with me—but you had better come at once and help me pack."

Having once decided on a definite plan of action, Molly's spirits rose; she felt she was going to see her lover, to set him free! When Paul saw her, when she pleaded with him and showed him things in the light in which she saw them he could not let Brian remain in prison a day longer.

By what methods her lover would be proved innocent and set free she did not know. She did not even consider. She believed that the word had but to be spoken and she would hold him in her arms and bring him back to life and love, bring him home!

Every minute as she packed her excitement grew.

"I have no clothes at all," she laughed to her maid. "Why have you let me go about all these years in dowdy black gowns and black hats? I shall want something—something fresh and pretty in Devonshire."

A blush actually flushed her pale cheeks as she remembered Brian's favourite colours and a certain little frock he used to like to see her wear—a very short red skirt and a funny little jacket, and on her head a white fur toque.

"You have always insisted on wearing mourning since your husband's death, madam," the maid replied, concealing the surprise in her voice. "I am afraid we have nothing very smart or pretty."

Molly hesitated a moment and then gave the maid a key and bade her unlock a trunk that had long stood untouched. It contained her wedding trousseau, hardly a garment of which she had ever worn. With feminine curiosity and delight at overhauling and touching pretty clothes, the maid laid dresses and petticoats and dainty laces on the bed.

For an instant a feeling of repulsion overcame Molly; everything connected with that wedding was hateful to her.

Most of the dresses were simple in the extreme—at the time she had so little joy in the contract that she had taken small interest in her garments—but there was one brown walking frock that looked as if it would suit her. She slipped it on, and her maid found some fur which she hastily shaped into a toque, and Molly shyly glanced at herself in the mirror and was a little surprised, and perhaps a little pleased, at what she saw reflected there.

It was so long since she had cared to look at herself with any interest! So long since she had cared whether her face was fair or youthful!

But now Brian would see her in a few hours, or at the most in a few days!

"I thought I had grown very old—and very ugly," she whispered under her breath, and her maid overheard and smiled.

"You look very beautiful to-night, madam."

"It is because I am going to see my beloved that my youth has returned," she told her heart, and her heart throbbed quickly in response.

The maid, roused to enthusiasm, offered to alter the dress during the night, so that it should look quite fashionable and neat, and also to make the fur into a proper toque; and Molly consented.

It was midnight before she went to bed. Even then she could not sleep. She rehearsed her meeting with Brian: how he would look, what she would say.

And when the storm raged noisily outside and the snow-flakes beat softly against the window-pane, she thought it was her lover calling to her to hasten to him.

The morning broke clear and bright, and Molly was soon being whirled through the snow-bound country at sixty miles an hour, a pace that seemed all too slow for her eager thoughts flying far ahead of the panting engine. She had not expected or prepared for the long drive over the moorland to Foxhole, but the keen wind braced her up for the coming ordeal, and sharpened her brain, and sent the blood tingling hopefully through her veins.

As the wagonette climbed the last steep hill her heart grew cold and faint with a sudden fear.

For the gaunt prisons stared at her across the great white plain, and along the white road a gang of convicts marched towards her.

She rose to her feet with a startled cry, and the driver turned with a laugh:

"Don't be afeared, miss, they won't 'urt you. 'Spects they're going to clear the snaw-drifts away round the prison roads."

Molly sank back into the seat of the wagonette again and sat crouched up under the box-seat trembling violently.

Nearer and nearer the gang approached, marching with swift, regular steps, glad of the exercise to keep them warm. The broad arrows on the caps and coats stood out flauntingly in the sunlight, and burnt themselves into Molly's brain like arrows of fire.

What if her lover were among that band of criminals!

She felt afraid to look, but as they passed she leant forward and raised her eyes, scanning each face with hope and fear and terror. On either side a warder marched with loaded musket.

No; Brian was not among them! Almost with relief, yet with something akin to disappointment, she drew back as the last man passed. A few paces behind a warder brought up the rear, and by his side walked a man also in prison garb yet a little different from the others; a slight beard covered his chin and his eyes were bright and fearless.

They looked straight at Molly and the warder followed their gaze. Then suddenly the convict halted and Molly could see the blood rush from his face and leave it white as the snow. He staggered and threw out his arms towards the carriage, whilst a hoarse cry rose to his lips and died away as the warder laid a warning hand on his shoulder.

"Are you mad?"

Then she recognised those bright, fearless eyes with the great soul burning in their depths, and ere she knew it her heart cried aloud:

"Brian, my beloved! Brian!"

The convict wavered, his eyes fixed on Molly, devouring her face. An instant they lingered there, no longer, but it seemed to her eternity, for they burnt into her heart and dumbly spoke the torrent of love that had been pent up in the house of silence for four awful years.

Again the warder whispered, casting an anxious glance at his comrades ahead:

"Are you mad—forward!"

With a mighty effort Brian Maxwell closed his eyes, his teeth met in his lips and the blood spurted from them as he turned his face away, and stumbled forward like a drunken man beside the warder.

The driver whipped up his horse, only conscious that his "fare" had been frightened.

But Molly lay back in a partial swoon, oblivious to everything, seeing only her lover's eyes fixed imploringly and wonderingly on hers, and broad arrows flying through the air and piercing her heart.

"Here's Foxhole, mum—do you wish me to wait?"

The coachman's voice startled her to consciousness. The wagonette had come to a standstill outside the front door of Paul's house.

Nervously Molly stepped to the ground, but though her limbs trembled her heart was more firmly set on its purpose than ever before.

"You had better wait," she said to the driver. She laid her hand on the bell to ring it, but as she did so someone passing through the hall saw her and opened the door.

It was Anne Bramant.

As the two women came face to face the conventional words each had ready on her lips died away, and they stared at one another in silence.

Molly instinctively knew she was looking at Anne Bramant, the woman who held Brian's honour and liberty in her hands. And Anne Bramant suddenly found herself confronted with a face from the past.

A face she had seen in a little inn on a hill outside Florence nearly five years ago.

She was the first to speak.

"You have come to see Mr. Bartlett?" she faltered. "Your name is——"

"Molly."

It was a whisper. Even as she spoke it she wondered why she had not said Mrs. Indulie.

"Won't you come in? I remember you; you were very kind to me one night some years ago in Italy—do you recollect? I was searching for—my child."

Anne spoke quickly; she was afraid of Molly, afraid of what she might say. Instinct warned her why she had come.

"Yes—I remember now. That is why, when I heard your name some weeks ago, it was vaguely familiar. So you have found your daughter?"

Anne nodded and pulled a chair forward by the fire.

"Won't you sit down? You must be very cold after your drive. I will ring for some tea for you."

"Thank you."

Molly found it difficult to take her eyes off Anne Bramant's face. It fascinated her; it reminded her of a broken melody, an unfinished poem. As she watched it she saw many emotions flying across it. She found it difficult to speak.

"Have you travelled—far?" Anne's voice was harsh; the question was merely to frighten silence away.

"From London?"

"You want to see Mr. Bartlett on important business?"

"Yes."

A servant entered with tea. When she had gone Anne poured out a cup and gave it to Molly. Then she walked to the doors and staircase and made sure no one could hear or see them.

She returned to the fireplace and sat opposite Molly and clenched her hands tightly together, whilst the pupils of her eyes grew suddenly large and bright.

"You cannot see Mr. Bartlett, he is ill, very ill. He met with an accident yesterday." She spoke quickly and spasmodically. "But I know that it is really me whom you have come to see; of course you know who I am, you know all. Paul—Mr. Bartlett told you."

"Paul told me everything, I think."

"And you have come to ask, perhaps demand that I shall speak, that I shall confess to being instrumental in taking your husband's life and so set Brian Maxwell free."

"I want the truth spoken, so that a brave and innocent man may not suffer a day longer."

"He suffers through his own folly, his blindness in believing *you* guilty," Anne said sharply. "And he made me swear silence all my life. If he hadn't done so, *I* should not now stand in danger of losing my liberty, perhaps my life!" Her voice sank to a whisper.

"Practice Strokes at Billiards" may be had of all booksellers, or post free for 1s. 2d. from the Book Publisher, 17 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

"If you are innocent——" Molly began, but Anne Bramant interrupted her fiercely.

"Who could prove my innocence now? The wrong man has suffered, someone must take his place, that's all! Justice when she has been proved unjust, has to sacrifice a victim on the altar of public opinion. For myself I fear nothing; I have suffered all my life, and a little more, now that my youth is on the wane, I could bear easily enough.

"The gods singled me out as their plaything. But they shall not make a plaything of my child; she is the one and the only good and beautiful thing that life has given me. If I sacrifice myself to Justice I also sacrifice Joan, and that I will never do. Do you understand me, never!"

"You must! You shall! You have promised that when Brian is released in a year's time——"

"When he is released he will speak, if he chooses. And if, in proving his innocence he proves my guilt—well, I must bow my head to the inevitable. But until then I will live, free and unmolested, with my child.

"God gave me the great agony and the divine joy of motherhood, and then, saving some few golden weeks, snatched out of long grey years, I have lived apart from my child. And now at last when she is restored to me and I can bask in her love and pour on her the flood of my love for one short year, you would snatch that year from me. You, who are nothing to me, who have no claim on me! And why—because your husband ruined my life and because your lover——"

Molly sprang to her feet.

"You are speaking of suffering and of parting," she cried. "What have your sufferings been compared with what Brian Maxwell has suffered these four years in the prison yonder? What I have suffered ever since the terrible day I married Richard Indulie? Brian has done no man or woman harm; can you say the same? If you have suffered through Richard Indulie did you do nothing to deserve that suffering? I have come to save Brian, to set him free, and I shall not leave until I have accomplished my purpose!"

As the two women faced one another with flashing eyes and heaving breasts, each fighting for the one she loved best, the mother for her child, the woman for her lover, neither heard footsteps quietly descending the staircase, neither was conscious of the presence of a third person until a soft, girlish voice startled the rising storm of their rage.

"Mother, Paul is asking for you—he wants you at once—he seems feverish again and very agitated——"

She broke off with a pretty apology to Molly.

"Mr. Bartlett is still suffering from the effects of—of his terrible accident yesterday. The doctor says that he has to be kept very quiet."

Anne Bramant turned away to avoid meeting Joan's eyes and hastened upstairs to Paul's room.

Molly grew red and white alternately as she looked at Joan's innocent and beautiful face and listened to her voice, trembling with anxiety for the man she loved.

"Won't you sit down?" Joan said. "You look so tired."

Molly sank into a chair and hid her face in the shadows.

"I am sorry to hear of Mr. Bartlett's accident," she managed to murmur. "I—I came to inquire——" She lied badly, but Joan thought she spoke the truth.

"How did you hear of—his accident?" she asked quickly.

Molly avoided the question.

"You are going to marry Mr. Bartlett soon?"

Joan's answer was a long time coming.

"Yes—I hope so."

Was it the tone of her voice—a strangely beautiful voice—was it the magic of her youthful face and figure and the old hall with the dancing firelight shadows, or was it only the memory of other days, and the sudden reaction of the present day, that brought a flood of warm tears to Molly's eyes and a flood of new emotions to her heart?

"Your mother will miss you very much when you marry."

"Perhaps the first few weeks—but Paul says that we three will live together for a year or two, until——"

Molly rose unsteadily and held out her hand.

"I fear I must be going now," she said brokenly, pulling the veil over her eyes. "Good-bye! Be very happy when you are married, Joan—and remember to always love your mother just as deeply as you do now—always."

Molly was moving towards the door.

"Forgive me if I have seemed rude in talking to you as I have done. And tell your mother that the business we were discussing can wait—for a year! She will understand." And without another word she passed out.

(To be concluded shortly.)

You can Always tell the Man with Kidney Trouble.

The man with kidney trouble is cheerless in expression, sallow, and heavy-eyed. He is easily irritated, excited and worried over trifles, and nervous. His back troubles him day and night—spoils his sleep, and makes him come over dizzy and faint with the slightest exertion. He is rheumatic, dyspeptic, and hopeless.

These symptoms tell of uric acid and waste matter in the body, and the patient cannot be well until the kidneys are well enough to drive these impurities out. Doan's Backache Kidney Pills make the kidneys well; they are the one medicine that is especially for kidney and bladder troubles—the one medicine that cures men and women to STAY cured, and protects them against such advanced kidney complaints as Bright's disease, urinary disorders, diabetes, dropsy, rheumatism, &c.

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"Just before last Christmas I was out in a bleak wind, and caught cold, which settled in my kidneys. It brought on a distressing ache in my back, just over where the kidneys are. Before many days had passed I was suffering from agonising lumbago and rheumatism. I couldn't help groaning with pain when I moved in bed.

"The first box of Doan's backache kidney pills eased me, although many other medicines I tried had been quite wasted. I went on with Doan's, and was soon able to return to business.

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Take PLASMON, the Food Enricher, daily with your food.

ISOBEL *will be glad to answer questions of general interest upon household matters so far as space permits. A pretty pencil-case will be given to each reader whose inquiry is dealt with on this page. Envelopes should be marked* HOME NOTES PAGE.

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Linseed Tea is very valuable for colds and coughs, and should be made thus: Pour two quarts of boiling water on one ounce of whole linseed and twelve drachms of liquorice stick. Add a few slices of lemon. Let the whole stand for six hours, then strain for use.

In Making Porridge keep to these proportions: Take one pint of water, and add to it a teaspoonful of salt. When the water boils thoroughly, add gradually a teacupful of oatmeal, stirring meanwhile. When all is mixed boil slowly for half an hour, stirring at intervals.

Ale Cup is a very good drink for an evening party if prepared as follows: Soak a pinch each of grated nutmeg, powdered cloves, and powdered cinnamon in a glass of sherry for half an hour or so. Pour on it one pint of strong ale and a bottle of gingerbeer. Stand in a very cold place till required.

For a Breakfast Relish. Place one pound of sausage-meat in a jar, stand it in a saucepan of boiling water, and steam for two or three hours. When nearly cold mash the meat well, add a slight flavouring of tarragon vinegar, allspice, and cayenne. Press into pots, run melted butter over, and keep in a cool place.

A Concrete for Your Yard should be made of five parts of gravel and sand to one part of freshly burnt stone lime, ground to powder without slacking, and measured dry. Turn and mix well together with sufficient water to slack the lime into thick mortar. You may add stone in small pieces with advantage. (*Reply to* ANSLEY.)

Snowdrift. Dissolve half an ounce of gelatine in half a pint of water, add half a pound of white sugar, and the strained juice of four lemons, and let all simmer for ten minutes. Strain and set aside till it cools and begins to thicken, then add the well-beaten whites of two or three eggs. Whisk briskly till all is very light and spongy. Heap up in a glass dish and set in a cold place, on ice if possible.

Haricot Bean Ragoût is greatly appreciated in cold weather, and is excellent served alone or with meat. Soak one pint of haricot beans for five or six hours, then boil until tender, and season with salt just before they are done. Drain in a colander. Have ready cut into slices two carrots and two turnips, and cook in the haricot bean liquor. Meanwhile slice two onions, and fry them to a pale brown in two ounces of butter. Now dredge in a tablespoonful of flour, add the haricots, and toss all together for five minutes. Lastly, add the cooked carrots and turnips and sufficient of the liquor to make a nice, rich stew. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and a dash of sauce. Stir until all boils and thickens, then serve.

Are You Looking for an Idea for Christmas Presents? In that charming little paper for ladies, viz., HOME NOTES, this week is given a very pretty Ivy design for a book cover, with full directions and illustrations of stitches. Book covers are always acceptable as presents and saleable at bazaars. The design given is extremely simple, and could be carried out even by those whose knowledge of embroidery is not very extensive. For those who prefer to work initial letters and monograms, there is a page devoted to them, transfer patterns of which can be obtained by applying to the Transfer Department, HOME NOTES, Henrietta Street, London, W.C. With next week's issue a paper pattern of a Tunic for a Boy from four to six years of age will be given away. Price 1d.

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To Cleanse a Fishy Frying-pan. Directly the fish is taken out fill the pan with water. Put it on the fire to boil, then put in a red-hot cinder. Afterwards rinse and wash in the usual way.

For Plain Choux Paste. Boil half a pint of water in a saucepan with two ounces of butter; add a pinch of salt. Then gradually add five ounces of flour. Mix thoroughly with a wooden spoon, and stir for about ten minutes while the paste cooks. Make into balls, and bake on a greased tin.

Try Rice Sauce with a Roast Fowl. Slowly cook half a cupful of rice with nearly a pint and a half of milk; add a small onion, salt, pepper, and a little parsley. When the rice is quite tender and the milk absorbed rub it through a sieve into a clean stewpan, and after adding a teacupful of milk reheat all again and serve.

To Use Up Cold Fish so that it will be tasty. Have some white sauce in a pan, remove all the fish from the bones, add it to the sauce, and let all get thoroughly hot. Then serve with a good garnish of fried breadcrumbs. The fish should be seasoned with pepper, salt, and lemon-juice before it is added to the stock.

Fig Dumplings. Mix half a pound of flour with a quarter of a pound of finely-chopped suet; add a quarter of a pound of figs chopped into small pieces, a tablespoonful of sugar, half a teaspoonful of baking-powder, and a teaspoonful of ground ginger. Mix all these with a little milk, divide into five or six dumplings, put into fast-boiling water, and cook for an hour and a half.

For Icing Mince-pies, Small Cakes, etc. Into the stiffly beaten white of one egg stir half a pound of best icing sugar, a teaspoonful of lemon juice, and a flavouring of rosewater. Beat this till perfectly smooth, which will take quite twenty minutes. Dip a knife into hot water, spread part of the sugar evenly over the little cakes or pies, and set in a dry place till the icing is set. If put in the oven, it must be very cool and the door left open.

Cocoanut Biscuits are easily made, and provide great enjoyment for the young people. First make a hole in the eye of a good cocoanut and drain out the milk into a cup, break the shell, peel the kernel and grate the white part of the nut; mix with one pound of grated cocoanut one pound of caster sugar, two ounces of fine flour and the beaten white of one egg. If these ingredients are not sufficiently moist to press into small lumps add a little of the cocoanut milk. Arrange the cakes on greased paper and bake them in a slow oven for one hour and a half.

Empress Pudding is generally popular. The ingredients for it are: Three ounces of breadcrumbs, two ounces of suet chopped very finely; three ounces of strawberry jam, two eggs, and one ounce of caster sugar. Pass the breadcrumbs through a sieve, so as to make them very fine; mix with the suet and a tablespoonful of flour, add the jam and sugar, then the well-beaten yolks of the eggs, and, lastly, the whites, whisked to a stiff froth. Place the mixture in a well-buttered mould, and steam for two hours. This pudding should be served with sweet sauce.

Lemon Snaps are very good for dessert at this time of year and should be kept in an air-tight tin. Blend half a teacupful of butter with a breakfastcupful of flour, add a quarter of a teaspoonful of carbonate of soda, and a teaspoonful of caster sugar. Beat up two eggs, add to them a teaspoonful of milk and the same quantity of essence of lemon, mix with the flour, etc., roll out very thin, cut with a tumbler, and bake in a moderate oven. These dainty biscuits need very careful watching when baking or they will get too brown.

Pork Pies. Take a little over one pound and a half of flour, half a pound of lard, and three-quarters of a pint of water. Boil the lard and water together, pour while boiling on to the flour, having previously made a hole in it. Mix in gradually with a wooden spoon and let it stand by the fire. Salt should, of course, be added to taste. Take some pork with a little fat, cut it into small square pieces, season them with cayenne, black pepper and salt, a little mace, and some finely-shredded sage. Mould the pastry as for ordinary raised pies of the size you wish, fill them closely with the seasoned pork, and decorate with paste ornaments. Bake the pies in a slow oven for about two hours, and when cooked, add through a hole at the top a little gravy made from the trimmings of pork. (*Reply to* PORK.)

Isobel

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ARE LOVERS UNTRUTHFUL?

During Courting Days there is generally too much Literal "Romance."

ONE might be pardoned for believing that such a beautiful thing as love was free from hypocrisy, but it is not; indeed, love-making entirely devoid of hypocrisy is almost impossible, and, of course, hypocrisy infers the art of lying; the hypocrite is always rather untruthful, if not actually in word, at any rate, in deed.

Just take a simple thing to begin with. Is it not a fact that almost every youth who falls in love with a girl is ready to swear by all the shades of his ancestors that he has never cared for one of her sex before?

It is, and the probability is that he believes what he is saying; for all that he is merely a hypocrite; he has probably loved a score of women.

Again, a youth imprints a kiss on a maid's lips; he asks her if they have ever been kissed before by a man. Oh, dear, no; the idea! Why, he is the very first man who has dared to, and other phrases to the same effect.

The girl, in fact, is just a hypocrite, and does not tell the truth, for it is almost certain that she has been kissed over and over again by men.

Then, men will paint rosy pictures of a future to girls they love—fine houses, every comfort, luxuries, whatever they want—whilst they earn perhaps 25s. per week in a haberdashery shop.

It's strange how level-headed girls believe these fairy tales, but they do, and ultimately, when striving hard to make ends meet, these old promises are not only remembered but raked out and hurled at the husband's head; and he deserves it.

"My word," says a youth, "wait till we are married; I'll see that you have nice furs to wear," knowing all the time that if his finances can run to rabbit skin, faked to look like sable, it is all they will be able to do.

And yet, with all these drawbacks, if you take away these hypocrisies from love-making would the latter not be robbed of half its pleasures?

That blessed thing "looking forward" plays a most important part in love-making, and undoubtedly he who can paint the future in the most glowing colours is the successful wooer, he casts a glamour over the girl with his hypocritical pictures of a coming time, and she, believing in him, takes it all in—and, of course, is deceived.

But there are baser hypocrisies practised on girls every now and again by youths.

For instance, a girl has an appointment with her lover one evening. When they meet he tells her with a long face that his Aunt Matilda is due that evening at 7.30, and he has been deputed to meet her at the station, will she (the sweetheart) excuse him for that evening?

Of course she will, and he escorts her home, parting with her with many protestations of undying affection, and deep regrets that he is being deprived of her delightful company.

Where is he at 7.30 that evening? He is to be found at a smoking concert, yelling out a chorus with the best.

When next he meets the trusting girl he has a fine story made up anent the fictitious arrival of his aunt! And there the matter ends. It may do the girl no harm, but what base hypocrisy!

Yet, things of that kind are ever happening; girls are being deceived every night by men, and, incidentally, so are men by girls.

It is possible that hypocrisy, such as that of the young man mentioned above, is engendered by seeing too much of a girl; so, as it is very common, young maids would be well advised not to meet their lovers too frequently.

Let the meetings not take place on every night of the week, but on two or three evenings at most; that gives the young man a little liberty, and saves him from being a worse hypocrite than he already is.

In giving the engagement ring men often play a despicable part.

It is notorious that some girls dearly love old-fashioned rings, and would rather have a family heirloom as an engagement ring than a brand new one straight from the jeweller. Well, men are willing enough to oblige them in this respect,

In one case a man deliberately went to a pawnbroker's where he purchased an ancient-looking ring for 15s. This he handed over to his sweetheart with the assurance that it had originally belonged to his grandmother. That was a disgraceful act, but it is a perfectly true case, and shows to what lengths a man will go.

It may at once be granted that some lovers are perfectly truthful, and would on no account deceive their sweethearts, but the great majority are not above a little trickery in order to retain, or increase, their sweethearts' affections.

Yes, hypocrisy plays an important part in love-making, no matter what be said to the contrary; if the truth were always stuck to, no gilding used, no deceit practised, no trumpet-blowing or exaggeration employed—then love-making would be prosy indeed.

You talk of a romantic couple, but what is romance? Romancing is the art of talking extravagantly, of telling fictitious and wonderful tales—well, there you are; so, when next you talk of a "romantic couple," please bear the above definition in mind.

THIS WILL INTEREST ANYONE SUFFERING WITH ECZEMA.

Mr. W. G. Weston, care of Messrs. Knott, of 49, Essex Street, Kingsland Road, N.E., writes: "I feel it my duty to inform you of the great benefit in health I have received through taking your famous 'Clarke's Blood Mixture.' I have been a sufferer from Eczema and an irritating skin trouble since the age of thirteen. My father was speaking one day to a friend of mine, who mentioned that he was being cured of an ulcerated leg, due to a horse-kick, by 'Clarke's Blood Mixture.' I continued, however, to suffer until April 4th last, when my friend told me he was completely cured. Then I started to take 'Clarke's Blood Mixture' myself, and I am now completely cured, after suffering and being disfigured for several years. I am able to follow my employment, and am very pleased to think there is such a valuable remedy obtainable for such a small sum. I should be pleased to answer any inquiries concerning my case."—July 17th, 1903.

A VALUABLE LESSON FOR SUFFERERS WITH BAD LEGS, ETC.

Mr. James Waring, of Clay Coton Lodge, near Rugby, writes: "It is with great pleasure that I write to tell you of the benefit I have derived from taking 'Clarke's Blood Mixture.' For a long time I suffered with bad legs and abscesses. I was under a doctor for five months, and, not getting much better, I went as an out-patient to the local hospital for nine weeks. The doctor then told me I should have to go inside before he could do anything for me. I went in and stayed for thirteen weeks, and after undergoing two operations I got a little better. Before I had been out of hospital a week I became worse than ever, so my wife told me to try 'Clarke's Blood Mixture.' I did so, and after taking five bottles and using four pots of your salve I was completely cured. I have waited about twelve months to see if my legs broke out again, but, thanks to your 'Clarke's World-famed Blood Mixture,' I am as well to-day as I have ever been in my life. You can make whatever use you like of this letter."—October 15th, 1903.

SOME INTFRESTING FACTS ABOUT A FAMOUS MEDICINE.

About forty years ago a well-known chemist in Lincoln, after years of study, perfected a medicine which, after every test, was pronounced the finest remedy for cleansing the Blood from every impurity, from whatever cause arising. This famous medicine is known throughout the world as Clarke's Blood Mixture. A specially interesting fact is that many thousands of letters have been received bearing testimony of the wonderful effect this medicine has upon diseases of the Blood and Skin, and in every case these testimonials have been entirely unsolicited. Clarke's Blood Mixture will permanently cure Eczema, Scrofula, Scurvy, Ulcerated Legs, Blood Poison, Eruptions, Boils, Gout, Rheumatism, and other Blood and Skin Diseases. This mixture is pleasant to the taste and warranted free from anything injurious to the most delicate constitution of either sex, from infancy to old age. Of all Chemists and Stores.

PHONOGRAPH BARGAINS

TEN NEW SERIES SELECTED RECORDS (consisting of Selections, Bell, Clarionic, and Punch), and this superb up-to-date PHONOGRAPH (equal to the best machines sold for only 10/-. The greatest value ever offered. Largest assortment of Phonographs & Records in the Kingdom. A few Good Instruments. Send for Catalogue. MEAD & Co., Dept. 90 LIVERPOOL.

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"The Best Bicycle that British Workmanship can produce."

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SHORT STORIES 1d. WEEKLY

Packets—½lb., 3½d.—1lb., 7d.—Pound tins, 1s. 2d.

EPPS'S

Is far and away the most nutritious beverage you can take for breakfast and supper. The natural flavour preserved. An admirable food of the finest quality and flavour.

COCOA

Buy a packet at once and you will continue.

29 YEARS' SUCCESS.

THE WORLD'S REMEDY FOR

Coughs, Colds, Asthma, Bronchitis, Influenza, Whooping-Cough, Hoarseness, &c.

Owbridge's Lung Tonic

IS AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY TO EVERYBODY.

Important Notice:

SUBSTITUTION.—There are so many imitations of this successful, and therefore popular, remedy that it is of the utmost importance you should use the word "OWBRIDGE" when buying Lung Tonic, and TAKE NO SUBSTITUTE.

Prepared by W. T. OWBRIDGE, M.P.S., Chemist, Hull. Sold everywhere in bottles, at 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d., 4s. 6d., and 11s.

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VENO'S LIGHTNING COUGH CURE

The purest and most efficient Remedy procurable for

COUGHS, COLDS, BRONCHITIS, ASTHMA, CATARRH, WEAK LUNGS, & CHILDREN'S COUGHS.

W. LASCELLES-SCOTT, Esq., F.R.H.S., in his certificate of analysis, among other things, says:—"I have pleasure in certifying that, in my opinion, VENO'S LIGHTNING COUGH CURE is an exceptionally safe, and effective preparation."

BRONCHITIS AND ASTHMA

Mrs. MARTIN HILL, The Hem, Shifnal, Salop, writes:—"I have had what the doctor called bronchial asthma, and he said I should never be cured, but thanks be to God and VENO'S LIGHTNING COUGH CURE, I am better now than I have been for six years; and since I have been taking your Cough Cure I can lie down and have a good night's rest. I have recommended your Cough Cure. I am sure it will be a great blessing to sufferers. I tried everything that people told me of, but nothing did me a bit of good. During the winters I had to sit three months in a chair at a time because of the shortness of breath and choking sensation, but all that has gone now, and I am looking very well."

Rev. W. DACRE, 2, College Villas, Kew, South Hill, Richmond, London, writes, June 17th:—"I have a high opinion of VENO'S LIGHTNING Cough Cure. I have used it with much benefit to myself."

CHILDREN'S COUGHS

Mrs. CHERRY, 57, Serpentine Street, Hatton Garden, London, writes:—"My little boy suffered from whooping cough for nine months. I tried no end of Cough Mixtures, but they did him no good. He could neither eat nor sleep and was very thin. I noticed an improvement in him after the first bottle of VENO'S LIGHTNING COUGH CURE, and now, sir, your medicine has cured him; and I am thankful to tell you."

Mrs. ADA S. BALLIN, 5, ADPY Street, London, Editor of *Womanhood*, writes:—"VENO'S LIGHTNING COUGH CURE is an exceedingly successful remedy; it is very pleasant to take and the relief it gives is very rapid. The preparation is perfectly safe for children."

Ask for VENO'S LIGHTNING COUGH CURE.

Large Trial Bottles 9½ Regular sizes 1/1½ and 2/9 at Chemists and Drug Stores, or post free from the VENO DRUG CO., 29, Cedar Street, Manchester.

Note: THE FRAME FOOD Co. LTD., will send post free to any Applicant who mentions this paper a daintily packed Sample of their World-Famous Infants' Food, together with a Booklet entitled "ENGAGE UP BABY," by a Hospital Nurse.

Nourish & Flourish!

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BEST FOR BABES.

16-oz. Tin, 1s.

FRAME FOOD CO. LTD., BATTERSEA, LONDON, S.W.

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ARE LOVERS UNTRUTHFUL?

During Courting Days there is generally too much Literal "Romance."

One might be pardoned for believing that such a beautiful thing as love was free from hypocrisy, but it is not; indeed, love-making entirely devoid of hypocrisy is almost impossible, and, of course, hypocrisy infers the art of lying; the hypocrite is always rather untruthful, if not actually in word, at any rate, in deed.

Just take a simple thing to begin with. Is it not a fact that almost every youth who falls in love with a girl is ready to swear by all the shades of his ancestors that he has never cared for one of her sex before?

It is, and the probability is that he believes what he is saying; for all that he is merely a hypocrite; he has probably loved a score of women.

Again, a youth imprints a kiss on a maid's lips; he asks her if they have ever been kissed before by a man. Oh, dear, no; the idea! Why, he is the very first man who has dared to, and other phrases to the same effect.

The girl, in fact, is just a hypocrite, and does not tell the truth, for it is almost certain that she has been kissed over and over again by men.

Then, men will paint rosy pictures of a future to girls they love—fine houses, every comfort, luxuries, whatever they want—whilst they earn perhaps 25s. per week in a haberdashery shop.

It's strange how level-headed girls believe these fairy tales, but they do, and ultimately, when striving hard to make ends meet, these old promises are not only remembered but raked out and hurled at the husband's head; and he deserves it.

"My word," says a youth, "wait till we are married; I'll see that you have nice furs to wear," knowing all the time that if his finances can run to rabbit skin, faked to look like sable, it is all they will be able to do.

And yet, with all these drawbacks, if you take away these hypocrisies from love-making would the latter not be robbed of half its pleasures?

That blessed thing "looking forward" plays a most important part in love-making, and undoubtedly he who can paint the future in the most glowing colours is the successful wooer, he casts a glamour over the girl with his hypocritical pictures of a coming time, and she, believing in him, takes it all in—and, of course, is deceived.

But there are baser hypocrisies practised on girls every now and again by youths.

For instance, a girl has an appointment with her lover one evening. When they meet he tells her with a long face that his Aunt Matilda is due that evening at 7.30, and he has been deputed to meet her at the station, will she (the sweetheart) excuse him for that evening?

Of course she will, and he escorts her home, parting with her with many protestations of undying affection, and deep regrets that he is being deprived of her delightful company.

Where is he at 7.30 that evening? He is to be found at a smoking concert, yelling out a chorus with the best.

When next he meets the trusting girl he has a fine story made up anent the fictitious arrival of his aunt! And there the matter ends. It may do the girl no harm, but what base hypocrisy!

Yet, things of that kind are ever happening; girls are being deceived every night by men, and, incidentally, so are men by girls.

It is possible that hypocrisy, such as that of the young man mentioned above, is engendered by seeing too much of a girl; so, as it is very common, young maids would be well advised not to meet their lovers too frequently.

Let the meetings not take place on every night of the week, but on two or three evenings at most; that gives the young man a little liberty, and saves him from being a worse hypocrite than he already is.

In giving the engagement ring men often play a despicable part.

It is notorious that some girls dearly love old-fashioned rings, and would rather have a family heirloom as an engagement ring than a brand new one straight from the jeweller. Well, men are willing enough to oblige them in this respect,

In one case a man deliberately went to a pawnbroker's where he purchased an ancient-looking ring for 15s. This he handed over to his sweetheart with the assurance that it had originally belonged to his grandmother. That was a disgraceful act, but it is a perfectly true case, and shows to what lengths a man will go.

It may at once be granted that some lovers are perfectly truthful, and would on no account deceive their sweethearts, but the great majority are not above a little trickery in order to retain, or increase, their sweethearts' affections.

Yes, hypocrisy plays an important part in love-making, no matter what be said to the contrary; if the truth were always stuck to, no gilding used, no deceit practised, no trumpet-blowing or exaggeration employed—then love-making would be prosy indeed.

You talk of a romantic couple, but what is romance? Romancing is the art of talking extravagantly, of telling fictitious and wonderful tales—well, there you are; so, when next you talk of a "romantic couple," please bear the above definition in mind.

THIS WILL INTEREST ANYONE SUFFERING WITH ECZEMA.

Mr. W. G. Weston, care of Messrs. Knott, of 49, Essex Street, Kingsland Road, N.E., writes: "I feel it my duty to inform you of the great benefit in health I have received through taking your famous 'Clarke's Blood Mixture.' I have been a sufferer from Eczema and an irritating skin trouble since the age of thirteen. My father was speaking one day to a friend of mine, who mentioned that he was being cured of an ulcerated leg, due to a horse-kick, by 'Clarke's Blood Mixture.' I continued, however, to suffer until April 4th last, when my friend told me he was completely cured. Then I started to take 'Clarke's Blood Mixture' myself, and I am now completely cured, after suffering and being disfigured for several years. I am able to follow my employment, and am very pleased to think there is such a valuable remedy obtainable for such a small sum. I should be pleased to answer any inquiries concerning my case."—July 17th, 1903.

A VALUABLE LESSON FOR SUFFERERS WITH BAD LEGS, ETC.

Mr. James Waring, of Clay Coton Lodge, near Rugby, writes: "It is with great pleasure that I write to tell you of the benefit I have derived from taking 'Clarke's Blood Mixture.' For a long time I suffered with bad legs and abscesses. I was under a doctor for five months, and, not getting much better, I went as an out-patient to the local hospital for nine weeks. The doctor then told me I should have to go inside before he could do anything for me. I went in and stayed for thirteen weeks, and after undergoing two operations I got a little better. Before I had been out of hospital a week I became worse than ever, so my wife told me to try 'Clarke's Blood Mixture.' I did so, and after taking five bottles and using four pots of your salve I was completely cured. I have waited about twelve months to see if my legs broke out again, but, thanks to your 'Clarke's World-famed Blood Mixture,' I am as well to-day as I have ever been in my life. You can make whatever use you like of this letter."—October 15th, 1903.

SOME INTFRESTING FACTS ABOUT A FAMOUS MEDICINE.

About forty years ago a well-known chemist in Lincoln, after years of study, perfected a medicine which, after every test, was pronounced the finest remedy for cleansing the Blood from every impurity, from whatever cause arising. This famous medicine is known throughout the world as Clarke's Blood Mixture. A specially interesting fact is that many thousands of letters have been received bearing testimony of the wonderful effect this medicine has upon diseases of the Blood and Skin, and in every case these testimonials have been entirely unsolicited. Clarke's Blood Mixture will permanently cure Eczema, Scrofula, Scurvy, Ulcerated Legs, Blood Poison, Eruptions, Boils, Gout, Rheumatism, and other Blood and Skin Diseases. This mixture is pleasant to the taste and warranted free from anything injurious to the most delicate constitution of either sex, from infancy to old age. Of all Chemists and Stores.

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Buy a packet at once and you will continue.

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YEARS' SUCCESS.

THE WORLD'S REMEDY FOR
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IS AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY TO EVERYBODY.

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SUBSTITUTION.—There are so many imitations of this successful, and therefore popular, remedy that it is of the utmost importance you should use the word "OWBRIDGE" when buying Lung Tonic, and TAKE NO SUBSTITUTE.

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W. T. OWBRIDGE, M.P.S., Chemist, Hull.
Sold everywhere in bottles, at 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d., 4s. 6d., and 11s.

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VENO'S LIGHTNING COUGH CURE

The purest and most efficient Remedy procurable for
COUGHS, COLDS, BRONCHITIS, ASTHMA, CATARRH, WEAK LUNGS, & CHILDREN'S COUGHS.

W. LASCELLES-SCOTT, Esq., F.R.M.S., in his certificate of analysis, among other things, says:—"I have pleasure in certifying that, in my opinion, VENO'S LIGHTNING COUGH CURE is an exceptionally safe, and effective preparation."

BRONCHITIS AND ASTHMA

Mrs. MARTIN HILL, The Hem, Shifnal, Salop, writes:—"I have had what the doctor called bronchial asthma, and he said I should never be cured, but thanks be to God and Veno's Lightning Cough Cure, I am better now than I have been for six years; and since I have been taking your Cough Cure I can lie down and have a good night's rest. I have recommended your Cough Cure. I am sure it will be a great blessing to sufferers. I tried everything that people told me of, but nothing did me a bit of good. During the winter I had to sit three months in a chair at a time because of the shortness of breath and choking sensations, but all that has gone now, and I am feeling very well."

Rev. W. BACKE, 2, Cottage Villas, Rectory Road, South Hackney, London, writes, June 17th:—"I have a high opinion of Veno's Lightning Cough Cure. I have used it with much benefit to myself."

CHILDREN'S COUGHS

Mrs. CRESSY, 27, Sacrapatten Street, Market Rasen, Lincs., writes:—"My little boy suffered from whooping cough for nine months. I tried no end of Cough Mixtures, but they did him no good. He could neither eat nor sleep and was very ill. I noticed an improvement in him after the first bottle of Veno's Lightning Cough Cure, and now, sir, your medicine has cured him; and I am thankful to tell you."

Mrs. ADA E. BALLIN, 5, Aspe Street, London, Editor of Womanhood, writes:—"Veno's Lightning Cough Cure is an unusually successful remedy; it is very pleasant to take and the relief it gives is very rapid. The preparation is perfectly safe for children."

Ask for VENO'S LIGHTNING COUGH CURE.

Large Trial Bottles 9½ Regular sizes 1/1½ and 2/9 at Chemists and Medicine Stores.

Or post free from the VENO DRUG CO., 39, Cyclar Street, Manchester.

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The Clearing House.

A penknife will be awarded to each person whose letter is dealt with on this page, or whose suggestion for a title is used.

TO COMPETITORS IN THE £5 A WEEK FOR LIFE COMPETITION.

THE work of checking the attempts in this competition is being carried on with all possible speed, consistent with the greatest care. For this purpose a large staff of expert checkers is employed, but it will naturally be some time before the final result can be arrived at. Meanwhile, we propose to give competitors in the £5 a Week for Life Competition an opportunity of still further relieving us of large sums of money in a novel scheme, of which full particulars will be announced shortly.

LABOURER asks: "How far does a man walk behind his plough in turning over an acre of land?" ——The answer, of course, would depend on the breadth of the furrow slice. If it was 7 inches broad, he would cover about 14½ miles; if it was 11 inches, 9 miles; and when a gang-plough is used, which makes a furrow of 24 inches broad, the distance travelled in turning over an acre is only four miles. From an economic point of view, however, it must be remembered that a horse will cover more miles in a day with a narrow share than he can with a broad one.

O. D. sends in another of those horrid age puzzles, the very reading of which suggests brain-fever. Mary is twenty-four years old. She is twice as old as Ann was when Mary was as old as Ann is now. How old is Ann?——I put the youngest member of the staff on to this task, but before he had been long at it he found Ann's age to run to so many decimal points that I could only print the answer in serial form. He was wrong, however, for the Mathematical Editor, in his usual scathing way, dashed it off on his shirt-cuff, and gave the answer "eighteen" after only five uses of the letter "x." I give this answer, as I do not wish readers' hearths and homes to be desolated this winter by such contortions as those undergone by our young gentleman. Besides, I am sure Ann will not be offended at the disclosure; eighteen is such a pleasant age.

BY beheading the word *chat*, then beheading the word thus formed, and so on, the words *hat* and *at* are made. A penknife will be given to each of the twenty-five readers who send in the best list of similar words contained in the English language. No word may be beheaded less than twice, and when the last beheading has taken place not more than two letters must remain. The number of words contained in each list must be clearly written at the foot. All attempts should, where possible, be written on postcards, and must be addressed to THE TWICE EDITOR, *Pearson's Weekly*, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., and posted so as to arrive not later than by first post on Wednesday, December 30th. Competitors are asked to send their attempts on picture postcards, where they can do so. These will be distributed among the little patients in children's hospitals after judging.

I HAVE a depressing letter from A. H. He writes: "I am often subject to fits of depression, nearly ending in suicide. I mistrust my own powers, doubt my ability, and envy everyone. I am fearful of the morrow, without cause, and generally find life to be not worth living. Can you assist me?" ——I think A. H. is suffering from the old, old complaint, a disordered liver, brought about by lack of exercise, open air, and generally healthy surroundings. I am not a doctor, so cannot prescribe, but should certainly advise A. H. to consult one. Melancholia is as much a physical as a mental disorder. As to moral resources against the disease, let A. H. try to get out of himself, so to speak. Find as much work to do as possible, and even rather more. Don't let the mind have an opportunity of getting morbid. Read, write, talk to people, even visit your relations, or play the banjo, to get variety in your life. And if the fits should come on again, just be philosophic about them. Laugh at them, and tell yourself that they are only passing, that you've had them before, and that they are not worth bothering about. Lots of people suffer just the same as A. H. at certain times, but they soon get over it.

RESULT OF THE "INCREASING" COMPETITION.

A PENKNIFE has been sent to each of the following:

Miss Halcrow, 18 Woodland Road, Rock Ferry, Birkenhead; W. Alexander, 77 Laburnum Grove, Portsmouth; W. Scott, 38 Ward, R.N.H., Stonehouse; P. K. Ward, Union Society, Oxford; S. Standbridge, Union Infirmary, Evesham; W. Long, Corsham, Wilts.; I. Sadler, 127 Wokingham Road, Reading; G. Steinthal, 39 Aldridge Road Villas, W.; J. Peake, 17 Kirkdale, Sydenham; H. Hurst, Westgate, Tadcaster; H. Hooley, 53 Derby Road, Stapleford; E. Hudleston, 19 Canynge Road, Clifton; G. Brett, Quebec Street, East Dereham; H. Whiffen, 21 Como Street, Romford; W. Pearson, 31 James Street, Leek; J. Dawson, 19 Bolton Road, Acton Green, W.; D. L. Jones, Ivy Buildings, Colwyn Bay; F. Marr, Fairhaven, Windermere; J. E. Davies, Myrtle Grove, Gynor Place, Ynyshir, Porth, S.O.; R. A. Oxbrow, 46 Rowden Road, Beckenham; G. Parris, 2 River Terrace, St. Neots; J. Williams, Engineers, Penbryn, Burry Port, R.S.O.; C. Field, 1 Fratton Buildings, Portsmouth; D. Smaje, 16 Brunswick Avenue, St. George's Road, Hull; B. Worthington, Kenmure, Suffolk Avenue, Southampton.

"Is there any law to prevent a person who is stone deaf from marrying?" asks RITA.——Good gracious, no! It would be a hard time for us all if marriage were run on the lines of a Civil Service examination.

"ARE railway passengers legally bound to pay their exact fares, and can the company refuse to give change?" asks D.W.——There is no law about the matter at all. Railway companies, like everybody else, are not compelled to "oblige" passengers with change. They do it simply as a concession to public convenience.

I AM getting rather tired of hat-raising problems. But F. R. sends in an unusually good one, so I make a concession and deal with it. He has "fallen out" with a certain lady, who has deliberately cut him dead for several months. Now, he is walking with another man who is still friendly with the lady, and raises his hat to her in passing. Seeing that she has been ignoring F. R., is it his duty to recognise her now, and, if so, how about their next meeting?——Certainly you have to recognise the lady, in this case, by raising your hat. It will not mean that you are saluting her personally, but that you are observing the courtesy due to your friend by acknowledging a friend of his. As to your next meeting, if she persists in cutting you, you will, as before, not raise your hat.

HERE is a pretty time-tangle. H. T.'s sister, who lives in India, was to be married at a certain time on a certain day. The family decided to celebrate the event, and it was arranged to drink the health of the couple in champagne at the very moment of the ceremony—three o'clock. A number of friends were invited to assist at the ceremony. On the morning of the affair, at nine o'clock, when H. T. was having breakfast, a cable arrived, "Married.—MAUD." Then it dawned on H. T. that, of course, Indian time is six hours in advance of British time, and that the wedding bumper would fall flat by being much too late.——My sympathies, H. T. I hope, however, you did not spoil the party by giving the game away. As for yourself, you, I suppose, drank the bride's health in your breakfast tea. It would be a new version of our old friend "tea and toast."

"SOME years ago," writes WANDERER, "a friend gave me a letter of introduction to someone in a certain town, likely to help me in business. I did not use it at the time, but since then I have gone to the place. Now, how long does a letter of introduction hold good? It was dated three years ago."——The letter holds good, I imagine, as long as your friendship with the person who gave it. If this was someone who knew you well, and all about your business, then you could present the letter and mention his name. If, however, he was only a casual acquaintance both of yourself and the man to whom he wrote the letter, you might be taking a liberty in presenting it so long after it was given. The circumstances of all three parties might have entirely changed during the interval, so that neither of you might be in need of each other's favours. But a letter of introduction given by a friend to a friend always holds good, so long as their relations remain the same.

"THE other day," writes H. T. R., "I was in the waiting-room of a certain station. Inside there were several people, who left one by one, and when I was alone I found an umbrella standing against the wall. An hour passed, but nobody claimed it, and then I took it to the station-master. If it is not claimed I want to know if I am entitled to it, or is it the property of the railway company?" ——If H. T. R. delivers the umbrella to the railway company he loses all claim to it should it not be applied for. The company sell off articles of lost property after keeping them for a certain time. I do not know why H. T. R. should think he has a claim to possessing it. "Findings are keepings" is not a very moral doctrine. Besides, as the railway company has taken the trouble to provide accommodation for the storage of lost articles, and a staff to look after them, it has certainly more right to possess the lost article than the man who has found it and merely taken the trouble to hand it to the station-master.

THE following amounts have been received for the FRESH AIR FUND since the last published list:—

Inasmuch, 5s. 6d.; F. Mortimer, 2s.; A. E. R., 3s. 6d.; Mr Rearson, 9d.; Liverpool, 5s.; A. Evans, 6d.; A Welsh Girl, 1s. 6d.; A. Edwards, 2s.; E. F., 2s. 6d.; S. S. Webb, 1s. 7d. R. Seddon, 1s.; W. S. C. and J. T. C., 2s.; J. W., 1s. 6d.; Amy and Peggy, 1s. 6d.; A. E. N., 3s.; J. E., 1s. 6d.; W. R., 1s.; F. Dawe, 11s.; One of 138 Juggles, 1s.; E. M. S. L. B., 1s. 6d.; H. W. Miles, £1; J. S. Guild, 2s.; J. Henderson, 5d.; Mrs J. Cumming, £2 10s.; F. Beach, 3d.; Better Late Than Never, 4s. 6d.; M. E. Deverell, 9d.; R. W. (Cairo), £1; per J. C. Turner, 10s.; J. Anderton, 2s. 6d.; Carrigoran, 6s.; Mrs. Hendrie, 2s. 3d.; A. Blackwood, 6d.; J. Bromilon, 5s. 4d.; Wowow, 9d.; L. W., 5s.; W. L., 9d.; Better Late Than Never, 5s.; D. W., 9d.; L. B., 5s.; W. Toone, 1s.; Two Little Maids at Graigewan, 2s. 6d.; H. Hitchins, R.N., 10s.; Plymouth, 2s. 6d.; A. Emby, 2s.; A Friend (Shipley), 15s.; Anon., 1s.; R. Yuill, 2s.; J. Laxton, 9d.; H. B., 3d.; Matric, 2s.; H. M., 5s.; H. M. R. N. G. S., 5s.; R. B., 2s. 3d.; Ilfracombe, 1s. 6d.; Balance L.R.C. Co.'s Drivers' and Conductors' Sports, per H. Harding, £2 2s.; N., 2s. 6d.; D. Walters, 9d.; Yorkshireman (Thirsk), 3s. 6d.; Boyer, 9d.; H. T. Schurwater, 2s. 8d.; Melissa, 6s. 6d.; B. J. Booth, 6d.; J. Brule, 8s. 3d.; W. C. B., 1s.; H. Nash, 6d.; J. Bonner, 1s.; Rev. T. A. Duncan, 12s.; M. A. Wright, 5s.; G. L. Martin, 2s. 4d.; M. B. Young, 1s.; E. M. A. T., £1 1s.; For the Kiddies, £1; In Gratitude for Sept. 20th, 1903, 5s.; H. A. M., 2s. 6d.; E. Fox, 9d.; G. A. T. B., 2s. 6d.; O. Drury, 6d.; S. Jermyn, 9d.; J. Bagley, 6d.; R. Phillips, 7d.; C. Maisey, 7s. 6d.; C. B. W., 2s. 6d.; E. O. O. B., per E. W. Wright, 5s. 5d.; J. W. Wright, 1s.; A. Clark, 10d.; Nga., 8s.; Anon., 18s.; R. H. McKay, 10s.; W. Banks, 2s.; Mrs. Strange, 6d.; T. Watson, 5d.; Anon., 1s. 6d.; Sors Bona, 2s. 6d.; W. Stanley Jones, 10s.; A. Nicholson, 4d.; Mrs. Arblaster, 3d.; J. Gray, 7d.; Bull (Sittingbourne), 1s. 6d.; W. C., 6d.; J. Hardy, 7d.; Mr. and Mrs. Marsh, 4s.; A. Davison, 8d.; L. Nolan, 2d.; D. Millar and Friends, 18s. 6d.; M. P., 6s.; H. H. Bolton, £5; A. Sympathiser, 10d.; M. D., 1s. 6d.; Jim Bamford, 2s.; R. Campbell and L. R. Smith, 1s. 6d.; The Monro Clan, 5s.; S. Cunningham, 10s.; W. C., 6d.; O. K., 5s.; G. Fisher, 3d.; F. Lister, 9d.; H. Ainsworth, 4d.; T. Edwards, 11s. 4d.; Mr. R. (Harrogate), 5s.; Buz, 2s. 6d.; Galloway, 3s.; P. Harrington, 7d.; M. Cheseman, 1s. 8d.; W. Hill, 10d.; Dick's Dot, 9d.; W. Bamford, 8d.; G. Stott, 6d.; G. Wyatt, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Naude and L. Swan, £3; Leddie and Charlie, 9d.; A Friend and Lover of Children, 10s.; A. T. C., 2s.; H. Combes, 1s.; T. Skeffington, 9d.; Revilo, 6s.; F. Farrant, 2d.; Rational, 5s.; S. D. Cunningham, 10s.; L. Fry, 8d.; S. Haines, 1s. 10d.; T. McC., 1s. 1d.; Sproat, 3s.; C. McKay, 10s.; J. Kirkwood, 10d.; H. Potter, 1s. 5d.; J. Guill, 1s.; J. Cahill, 10d.; J. Willis, 2s. 6d.; Swears, 2s. 3d.; W. J. A., 8d.; R. Rankin, 1s. 3d.; W. Statham, 5s.; H. G., 1s.; Gethobi, 1s.; Father of Nine, 6s. 9d.; W. Ashton, 1s.

COLLECTED: Capt. J. E. Leach, £13 8s. 6d.; A. Small, 3s. 6d.; J. Cameron, 2s. 6d.; L. Mitchell, 4s.; P. Harding, 6s. 4d.; J. Randell, 3s. 4d.; Sergt.-Mjr. G. Dunkeld, £1 10s. 6d.; T. Bradley, £1 2s. 3d.; A. Addison, 2s.; R. Jude, 4s. 4d.; M. Rock, 5s. 6d.; W. Russell, £1 4s.; A. Roberts, £1 14s. 6d.; F. Cooper, 2s. 10d.; Proceeds of Bazaar by Five Little Girls, £7 4s.; Hilda M. H., 3s. 3d.; G. Withers, £1 13s.; J. Elliman, 2s. 6d.; W. Hardman, 5s.; Elsie Collier, £1 0s. 6d.; J. W. Baker, 10s.; C. Roth, 3s. 4d.; A. Deacon, 10s.; Sergt. D. Kay, £1; H. Jones, £2 12s. 3d.; H. Ninian, 6s. 10d.; Victory Place, T. Chess Club, F. M., 5s.; H. H., 10d.; J. Mallit, 4s. 2d.; Sale of Belt, 16s.; H. Cook, 3s.; M. Mercer, 2s.; F. M. Prenter, 4s.; J. Chadwick, £4; A Few Bodmin Boys and Girls, 1s.; C. E. Freeman, 8s. 4d.; T. R. C., £1 16s.; W. Bowler, £1 17s. 6d.; M. Adams, 7s.; W. Greenwood, 14s. 9d.; H. Saville, 10s.; W. Welford, 8s.; Winnie, 1s.; W. Whitehead, 2s.; C. Wadey, 10s.; Stokers, H.M.S. *Gibraltar*, £1 12s. 6d.; Mrs. Beinning, 3s.; J. Rees, 6s.; Highbury Quadrant Bible Classes, £4 6s. 4d.; R. Roper, 10s.; C. B. Keniston, £3 7s. 9d.; A. Proffitt, Queen's Hotel, 10s.; Cardiff Co-operative Society Employés, per C. Marsh, 7s.; W. Smith, 10s.; Afternoon Concerts, per F. Kissel, £7 10s. 6d.; M. Nicol, 5s.; Maintenance Workshops C. S. A. R., Bloemfontein, per J. H. B. Cunningham, £19 1s.; Mrs. Carter, 2s.; Oscar Steffen, £3 12s.; Balance from H.M.S. *Ariel* Football Club, 11s.; B. Wilkinson, 5s.; Younger Readers of *Natal Witness*, £1 6s. 6d.; B. Kingston, 7s. 6d.; B. Tavner, 6s.; M. Crawford, 10s.; Sergts. Mess, Army Pay Corps, per Sergt. Cottrell, £5 12s. 2d.; Mrs. N. Heath, £1 0s. 6d.; B. King, 8s.; R.M.S. *Sokoto*, £2 16s.; Inhabitants, Nelspruit, Transvaal, £5 2s. 6d.; H. B. and A. E. W., 2s. 4d.; s.s. *Bursiu*, per Capt. J. Swift Hely, £20; P. Tucker, 10s.; H. R. Wright, 2s. 6d.; H.M.S. *Bellona*, per Lieut. Vaughan, £1 4s. 1d.; F. Smith, 5s. 4d.; Friends in Falkland Isles, per Lillie Felton, £1 14s. 2d.

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